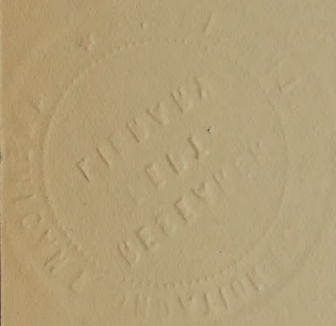






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THE LIFE OF
SIR ARTHUR PEARSON
BY
J. H. B. HARRIS



THE LIFE OF
SIR ARTHUR PEARSON
Bt., G.B.E.



Photo. Russell & Son

1918

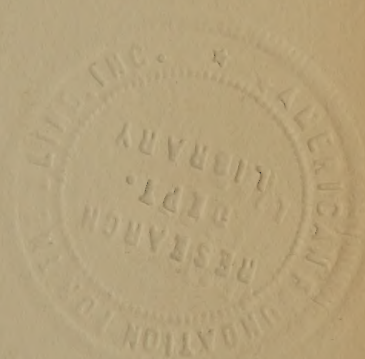
THE LIFE OF SIR ARTHUR PEARSON

BT., G.B.E.

NEWSPAPER PROPRIETOR AND FOUNDER OF
ST. DUNSTAN'S HOSTEL FOR SAILORS AND
SOLDIERS BLINDED IN THE GREAT WAR
1914-1918

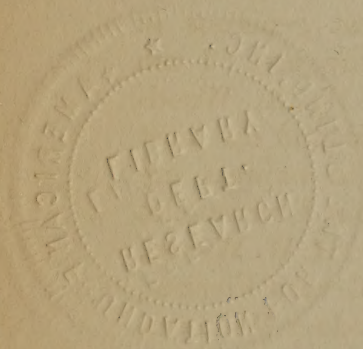
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NOTE

LADY (ARTHUR) PEARSON and her son, Sir Neville Pearson, did me the great honour to suggest that I should write this life of the man whom I served for some years and for whom I had the most sincere affection and admiration. I am greatly indebted to them for the information with which they have provided me and for much helpful criticism, but the book is entirely mine, and I am alone responsible for its estimates and its judgments. No biography of Sir Arthur Pearson could possibly have been written without the aid of my friend Ernest Kessell, Sir Arthur's secretary for over thirty-seven years, who has been most generous in collecting dates and facts for my use. I am under particular obligation to W. A. Woodward, Sir Arthur Pearson's cousin and his most intimate friend. I also desire to express my thanks to A. W. Rider, Ralph Blumenfeld, Sir Harry Brittain, H. A. Gwynne, H. W. Wilson, Ernest Williams, P. W. Everett, Gerard Fienes, Frank Lamburn, Sir Ernest Hodder-Williams, and Captain and Mrs. Ian Fraser. The officials of the Tariff Reform League were good enough to supply me with much useful information, and I am also indebted to Mr. Austen Chamberlain and Sir William Ingram.



December 31st

1921
SANDRINGHAM NORFOLK.

My dear Lady Victoria
The oppressed woes
of Sir Arthur Pearson
needs no explanation
for it is known far
& wide. It is the
greatest personal
tireless efforts, on
behalf of those who
have the sympathy
of all.

Facsimile of Letter written by H.M. Queen Alexandra
in appreciation of Sir Arthur Pearson's work.

himself deprived
of sight every hour
of her life her con-
-centrated and arduous
efforts, towards making
life tolerable
to those who through
the cruelties of War
or gross hereditary
degeneracy were terribly
suffered - He knew
their helplessness

he shared their
saddness, he sympathized
with every sorrow
they suffered, & with
a compassionate strength
and with cool determi-
nation and tireless
perseverance, he set
to work to create a
system, which would
restore the lost of
life to the blind,
which would assist them
to forget their

disableness, and which
was possible. He was to
cooperate on every term
with the good of the world.
He left nothing behind,
he adopted & created every
means, by which moral
evil be resisted, & trained
& educate those to whom
he devoted his life. How
he succeeded, only those
who have been benefited can
tell but the tributes of affection
& gratitude of his death, were
sufficient acknowledgment
of his labors. May his work
live after him & prosper in the earnest
prayer of ~~the world~~

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1871

CHAPTER I

THE MAN OF CHEERFUL YESTERDAYS AND CONFIDENT TO-MORROWS

ARTHUR PEARSON was born with an amazing zest for life. Whatsoever his hand found to do, he was compelled by his character to do with all his might. He was not a strikingly original man, but he was a man of the most abounding energy. He was not much concerned with the subtleties of life, but he was immensely interested with living. He accepted conditions as they were, faced new circumstances as they occurred, without bothering at all from what causes the conditions had arisen, or what was the reason that had brought the circumstances about. Each new condition and each fresh set of circumstances were instinctively regarded by him as the opportunity for fresh experience, as the incitement to novel thrills, as another region to be explored. For such a man, difficulties were positively attractive, and the worst misfortune could have no terror.

I knew Arthur Pearson personally for more than twenty years. I was in his employment on the staff of the *Daily Express* for ten of

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those years. Since undertaking to write this biography, I have discussed his character with a considerable number of men and women who knew him better than I did, and I am convinced that zest for living was the keynote of his character, that it explains his early success, and that it was the great possession that rendered him able, at the crisis of his life and of the life of his nation, to render unique service to his day and generation. The history of the Great War reveals few instances of vitally important tasks performed with unqualified success, and contains the names of few men whose work can be written down as perfectly done. Arthur Pearson of St. Dunstan's was one of those few men. The work that he did urgently needed doing. No other man was one-third as qualified as he was to do it, and the story of St. Dunstan's is the record of his supreme success. The care of the men blinded in the service of their country was the culminating achievement of his career. For it, the rest of his life was a preparation—his business experience, his habit of command, even the great misfortune that forced him out of the hurly-burly of newspaper direction. These things were the training for the victory over blindness which he taught his fellows to achieve. Another man might have had the same experience and yet would have failed if he had not possessed Arthur Pearson's peculiar qualities.

It is far too soon to estimate the importance of the service rendered to his fellows by Arthur Pearson at St. Dunstan's. He took the men who in the heyday of their youth had lost their sight fighting for their country, inspired them with courage, filled them with hope, taught them how to overcome their handicap, and contrived to make their lives happy and useful. But he did far more than this. He revolutionised the attitude of mind of the sighted towards the blind. Before Arthur Pearson ceased to be able to see, the typical blind man tapped his way along the street with a stick, an object of pity, a solicitor of alms. Except for those lucky persons with assured unearned incomes, the blind man was regarded as hopelessly handicapped and unable, except in rare cases, to fight the battle of life for himself. We may sincerely pity people without normal faculties, but the object of continual pity sooner or later becomes a nuisance. This may be regrettable. It may evidence a limitation of sympathy, but is unquestionably a fact, and it is a fact that no one realised more fully than Arthur Pearson. When he set out to work for the blind his object was to help the blind to cease to be pitiful, to cease to be persons for whom their fellows were sorry. His object was to demonstrate that the loss could be minimised, and that the blind could be so educated that they would be able to fend for themselves, to

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arrange their own lives, and to hold their own in industrial and in social life. He lived long enough to carry out this ambition to the full. The war and St. Dunstan's provided him with a magnificent opportunity both to prove his theories and to draw public attention to them. The nation was naturally more interested in its blinded soldiers and sailors than it could be in the unfortunates who had lost their sight through disease or civil accident, or who had been born blind. While, therefore, Arthur Pearson was directly working for the men maimed in the war, he was giving the world a dramatic demonstration of the fact that the handicap of blindness could be overcome to an extent never dreamt of before he began his great work.

He did something even more than this. The keynote of the St. Dunstan's education was courage. So long, he insisted, as a man had the courage to face life, so long would life be compelled to give him of its best. There could be no defeat without fear. Difficulties faced boldly are always overcome. The men of St. Dunstan's accepted the Pearson gospel, and the sighted world was amazed, not so much by the fact that they were able quickly to learn trades, but by their extraordinary cheerfulness and evident happiness; and the sight of these blind men, nearly all of them young, with the greater part of their lives before them, eager, interested, content and often ambitious, was an



Photo. F. Spalding

1868, AGED 2.



Photo. F. Spalding

1870, AGED 4.

object lesson that could not well be ignored. It was shameful for the rest of us to whine over smaller misfortunes and to despair at occasional set-backs, while the blind men of St. Dunstan's could face the world with a smile. So with splendid emphasis Arthur Pearson proved that the courageous must inherit the kingdom. It may be true that "courage mounteth with occasion," and that the quality of man is rarely to miss the means of meeting a crisis; but, anyhow, rarely has there been a greater example of the courageous and even cheerful acceptance of handicap and misfortune than was shown by Arthur Pearson when he lost his sight. Never has a man possessed a greater measure of the "courage never to submit or yield." There were few things in common between Milton and Arthur Pearson except that they both became blind, the poet in his old age, the modern man of affairs in the prime of his life; but Arthur Pearson certainly obeyed Milton's injunction :

Argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward.

The courage that Arthur Pearson himself possessed he was able to inspire in others similarly unfortunate; and, owing to his influence, there was during the war a great demonstration of the unconquerable soul that, in the

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fell clutch of circumstance, neither winced nor cried aloud.

There must always be intense interest in those individual qualities that enable a man to grave his name deeply on the pillars of his generation, and I am eager, in these first pages, to emphasise what I am convinced were the most vital of all Arthur Pearson's qualities—his zest for life, his intense interest in achievement, and the corresponding and possibly inevitable indifference as to the exact reasons why things must needs be done.

Arthur Pearson was not a philosopher. He was a man of action. Abstract propositions left him cold. He was always alert in his curiosity about everything that was living. During the short time that he was at Winchester, he was christened the "Pigeon," from the habit he had of throwing up his head and almost pecking at every new thing that came his way. Even as a boy he was handicapped by his extremely short sight, but that did not prevent him from playing the school games with all his might. Games always fascinated Arthur Pearson, and here again is the mark of the man of action. Cricket, hockey, lawn tennis, real tennis, golf were all played by him at one time or another in his life, and to games he gave the same keenness that enabled him when he was little more than a boy, to establish his great publishing business. Nothing annoyed

Arthur Pearson more than for a man to play or to work perfunctorily. He, himself, was always out to win. But the adventurer is never for long content with one adventure. The yearning for something new is as vital to the adventurer as the joy in difficulties to be overcome. So one pursuit followed another in Arthur Pearson's life. Soon after the establishment of *Pearson's Weekly*, and when for the first time he possessed something like a considerable income, he began to be immensely interested in horses. He was an excellent if not a particularly graceful rider. He began with one horse. Within a few months he had a stud. He first drove a dogcart. Then he drove tandem. In a few weeks he was driving a four-in-hand. A little while afterwards, yearning for something entirely new and fresh, he astonished the natives of his Surrey home by driving through the lanes with four horses in a line.

Then the age of motors began, and although up to the end of his life and after he was blind, Arthur Pearson still loved to spend Sundays riding on the Downs to the north of Brighton, the motor largely pushed the horse out of his mind. He began with a small low-powered car, going on and on with higher and higher-powered cars which, until he lost his sight, he drove with characteristic recklessness. In all this there is the same note—hunger for experi-

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ence, zest for life, eagerness not to lose one single possible thrill.

Charles Fry once described Arthur Pearson as a great sportsman. He loved games and he loved struggles, and when as it might have seemed the game went against him, to quote Charles Fry's words: "He accepted the blow with a smile indeed, but also without turning a hair of his life in its essentials."

Arthur Pearson was a countryman, and another of his characteristics was an intense love of the country-side and a considerable knowledge of its wild life. Some of his earliest journalistic writings were quite charming country-life essays, which were printed in the *Cornhill* and other publications. All through his life he loved gardens, and he was fond of repeating the quotation: "One is nearer to God in the garden than anywhere else on earth."

I have a curious little book in which Arthur Pearson, then a boy journalist, kept a list of the articles that he wrote and of the papers in which they appeared, and his interest in natural history is shown by the titles: "The Swallow," "King of the Forest," "London Birds," "American Song Birds," "Funny Trees," "Animals and Music," "Snails," "Spiders," and so on.

This love of the country remained with him to the end; and so keen was his appreciation, and so real was his knowledge, that long

after he had lost his sight he was able to describe with almost uncanny accuracy the quality of the country through which he had walked or driven. He would describe the colour of flowers, the beauty of the view, the state of the crops. He knew the country and he listened and remembered.

It was obviously this zest that made his victory over blindness so complete. He was not content to be left out of things because he could not see. He was determined to live, and he always wanted to know. In his later years he conceived a considerable affection for the theatre, and he insisted on his companions telling him the small details of the action, which he considered and then criticised, just as clearly and intelligently as if he had been able to see for himself. This may seem a very small matter, but it is one more revelation of the constant eagerness for complete experience.

No successful man was ever less prone to the unforgivable sin of condescension to his subordinates. As a matter of fact, many of his intimate friends all through his life were men who were numbered among his employees. His general attitude to them was that of a good-humoured understanding colonel of a regiment. He never wanted to be anything more than *primus inter pares*, though he was very definitely *primus*. He was a man of most positive opinion, impatient of contradiction, and

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absolutely disinclined to argue when he had once made up his mind. Consequently, he preferred the society of persons who would hesitate to argue even when they disagreed. This impatience with disagreement may and possibly must entail certain limitations of success, but absolute sureness of oneself and absolute reliance on one's personal judgment are obviously necessary to any sort of success, and without them early and speedy success can most certainly never be achieved. It would, I imagine, be impossible to cite one man who has made a conspicuous success in the world of action who has not been ready to bank everything on his own judgment. Certainly Arthur Pearson did this continually all through his life, and generally the result was that he won the stake for which he was playing. The habit of believing in himself which made him George Newnes' right-hand man before he was twenty, which enabled him to establish a business of his own when he was twenty-four, which was the principal asset of the Tariff Reform League agitation, was also, above all other things, the possession that enabled him to open the doors of real life for the men who sought his aid at St. Dunstan's.

At St. Dunstan's, too, he remained *primus inter pares*, the leader definite and masterful, but infinitely sympathetic because he realised the handicap of the men with whom he was dealing, and entirely practical in his methods.

Nothing illustrates this better than Mr. Frederick Martin's account of his first interview with Arthur Pearson in the house he opened for blind officers in Portland Place. Mr. Martin was shown into a room impregnated with "an odour of cigar smoke, powerful and fragrant," and was greeted in a characteristic casual manner :

" 'Hullo, X., very glad to see you. Had a good journey up? Come along and sit down. We must have a chat for a minute or two.'

" So this was the fussy philanthropist of one's apprehensions, this was the man whose career had been blasted by blindness. At any rate, there was nothing weak about the grip of the right hand, nothing undecided about the manner in which the left hand, placed on the visitor's shoulder, impelled him to sink down upon a luxurious sofa. The talk went on in rapid jerks, punctuated by puffs at the cigar.

" 'Delighted you have found it possible to come up . . . but at the moment I can spare you only a minute or two. They give me no time to myself nowadays. I like dining with the officers, but seldom get the chance. Have to go out in five minutes to talk at a big hullabaloo in the City. You'll be all right here, I think. There's plenty to do, and a lot of very nice people about. The great thing is to keep going and cultivate every faculty you have. What sort of work do you think of taking up? Well, never mind, there's plenty of time to think of that later. Now I must be off. I think the house is all right, but if there's anything you

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want, ask So-and-So about it. We're always open to hints. Come and see me any time you like. By the way, I suppose you're over the funk stage of not seeing as well as you used to? It's not pleasant at first, but that can't be helped. What you've got to do is to call it a beastly nuisance, and then carry on and forget about it. That's all there is to it. Good night, I hope you'll be happy here. Let me find the door for you. Detestable things, half-open doors—aren't they? The only way to learn how not to bump into them—is to do it once or twice, good and hard. You're six paces from the stair, and the rail is on your right. Mind the twist half-way down. All right? Good.' ”

A highly imaginative man who loses his sight must inevitably be obsessed and limited by constantly brooding over the many things that he has lost. Arthur Pearson only remembered the things that he had kept, and his one concern was to educate himself in such a way as to make the very utmost of those things that remained. His keenness was maintained if not increased. His quickness of judgment, his complete faith in his own decisions, his amazing energy were all unabated. The blind hustler was a far greater hustler than the hustler who could see.

He had a rare and curious habit of dropping the curtain on the past. If a friend began to be irritating and if it were clear to him that a friendship, however satisfying it had been, had worked itself to its end (as friendships often

will), Arthur Pearson could wipe the whole thing out of his life almost without an effort. The friendship had ceased, but life remained with its infinite possibility of new attachments and other friendships. Exactly the same thing happened to him with interests and occupations. There was a huge struggle to establish *Pearson's Weekly* and its allied publications. When they were established and when he was assured, so far as that were possible, that they would go on supplying him with a sufficient income, it began to bore him to go every day to Henrietta Street. He had no sort of care for money for money's sake. The fight had been a thrill, the victory was won, and there were many more interesting things in life for him than to go on day after day counting up the spoils. In his early days he often said that the man who went on working after he had assured himself ten thousand a year, was a fool. That sum, and more, being assured, long before *Pearson's Weekly* had been established ten years, Arthur Pearson found a far greater delight in his various country occupations at Frensham Place than in the daily details of business in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden.

Then he founded the *Daily Express*, and for years he once more had the joy of battle. A hard enough uphill fight it was, but because it was hard and uphill it was amusing and exciting. Then came the Tariff Reform agitation,

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and for the first time in his life politics became Arthur Pearson's obsession. I shall, of course, have much to say in its right place of his connection with Joseph Chamberlain, and here it is only necessary to note that when the Tariff Reform agitation came to an end, Arthur Pearson not only lost all interest in it, but practically forgot all about it. One of the blinded officers associated with the work at St. Dunstan's is also a keen politician, and he has told me that, over and over again, he tried to get from Arthur Pearson some details of the Tariff Reform fight which began in 1903 and finished with complete defeat at the polls in 1906. Here was a young man eager for knowledge of the politics of the immediate past, but Pearson would never even talk to him about Tariff Reform. For him it was as a tale that is told, as a chapter that is finished. This rather unusual power of leaving the past behind, hardly without a regret and almost without a memory, was an immense help to him when he had to face the world without the power of sight. It merely meant for him that he once more began again. He had begun again many times before, and each new beginning had brought with it a new satisfaction; and although I can say from my own knowledge of him that the loss of sight brought with it, as it always must, a certain measure of bitterness, the bitterness was soon forgotten, and all that remained in the mind, heart and soul was a

consciousness of new difficulties to be overcome and of new opportunities to be exploited.

Practical philanthropy is perhaps the rarest thing on earth, and earth knows few more pernicious nuisances than the philanthropist who is unpractical. The ordinary individual going about eager to do good can only escape assassination by a miracle. Philanthropy too often presupposes patronage, and the common human man infinitely prefers to wallow a free man in his own slough of despond than to have his feet set upon a rock by patronising condescension. I do not think that Arthur Pearson was ever even a conscious philanthropist. He was certainly never a patronising philanthropist. He was a man who had to have a job. When, at the end of 1913, he knew that he must always be blind, and that therefore the work of the past could not possibly be the work of the future, his first impulse was to find other work that he could not only do well, but that he could do far better than any other person. He realised at once that particularly happy circumstances made it comparatively easy for him to minimise the disadvantage of blindness, and he determined that his particular job was to provide the fullest possible opportunities for victory to other blind men less happily situated than himself. He immediately associated himself with the National Institute for the Blind, an institute at that time badly handicapped for the want

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of funds, and he set himself, with his characteristic audacious originality to collect sufficient money to make the institute a really effective national possession.

For thirty years he had been supplying the sighted public with something to read. His first job, as the blind leader of the blind, was to collect sufficient funds to enlarge and humanise the Braille Library, a library of books for the blind, and it was characteristic of him that he headed his first appeal with a declaration that the real importance of the Braille invention is "that it makes the blind far more independent than they could otherwise be." Arthur Pearson was vehemently and pugnaciously independent—emphatically his own man. The accidental circumstances of blindness could not make him dependent fundamentally, and his first thought was how degrading and life-destroying it must be for his fellows to have no independence, and how necessary it was that he should set himself to the task of making them, too, independent. How he worked to endow the Braille Library will be told in a later chapter. I mention the fact here as another strong light on Arthur Pearson's character. It was significant how little time he wasted. It was not until the end of 1913 that he knew for certain that he would never see again. Early in 1914 he had begun his new job, and a score of ingenious schemes for collecting money were devised and initiated

before the end of March. In the years before he lost his sight, Arthur Pearson had realised as much as any man who had ever lived how good it was to live and to see. He could see no more, but his life was still his. The blow, far from depressing him, was an actual stimulant to renewed energy and more strenuous endeavour. And this surely is sportsmanship in its very highest sense. It is not astonishing that he never tired of repeating Henley's poem, "Unconquerable."

There was a large element of Peter Pan in Arthur Pearson—a great deal of the boy who refused to grow up. Life was a game; a game to be won if possible, but under any circumstances a game to be played with every ounce that was in him and according to all the accepted rules. He loved practical jokes. Every kind of action interested him. He liked to know how everything was done. At one time in his life he was attracted by caravanning, and during one caravan holiday in the New Forest, Arthur Pearson appointed himself the cook. Cooking was something new to him, and he found it just as interesting as riding and driving, playing golf and running newspapers. It was something to be done, something that was not very easy, and therefore something to which he set his hand with a zest.

Arthur Pearson, like all men to whom action is life, resented anything like ill-health. He was

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unhappy if he were not absolutely fit. This was one of the reasons for his devotion to exercise, and it always caused him to be careful what he ate and drank, although like all wholesome, healthy men he was really keenly interested in food and keenly appreciative of fine cooking. He had a curious horror of growing fat, and he took a good deal of almost boyish pride in the slimness of his figure and in the general smartness of his appearance, though in his early days he was utterly indifferent to dress, and generally wore at his office a Norfolk jacket and a white piqué four-in-hand tie with a gold pin. At that time of his life he would never dress for dinner if he could possibly avoid it. One of his rules of health was that one day free from work in each week was absolutely necessary for a busy man. "On that day," he once said, "you must sleep as much and eat as little as possible. It is the combination of hard work and much eating that kills people."

Fond as he was of games, he took no interest whatever in sport when the end of sport was killing. Mr. Frederick Martin relates that Arthur Pearson once told him of a gillie who took him out deer-stalking, and was disgusted to find that his employer's interest entirely evaporated when, having by strenuous climbing and patient observation circumvented the quarry, they were finally within its range. "We had won the game," said Sir Arthur, "we had



Photo. F. Spalding

1872, AGED 6.

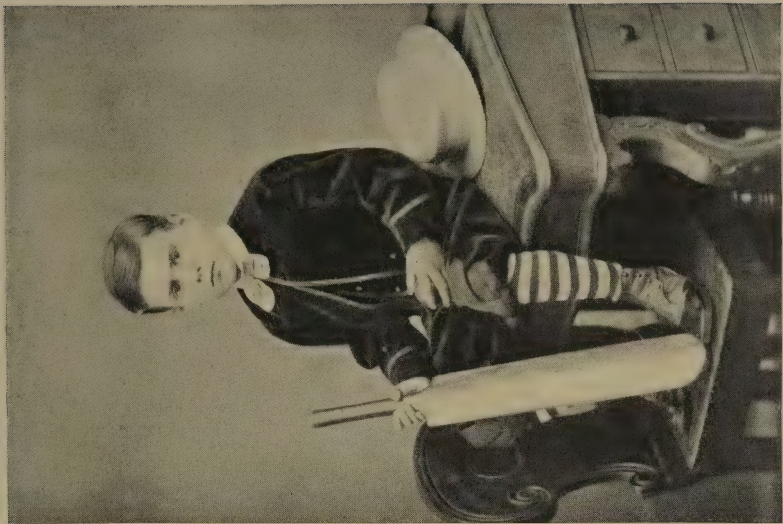


Photo. F. Spalding

1875, AGED 9.

pitted our wits and our knowledge of the country against his instinct and his speed, but why on earth should we shoot the poor beast when it gave us so much fun ? ” Few men have been less willing to inflict pain on either man or beast, and it particularly hurt Arthur Pearson to learn of the sufferings of the helpless.

He loved children. All through his life the happiness and welfare of children were very near his heart, and he liked nothing better than to be described as the children's friend. He started *Pearson's Weekly* in 1890. Eighteen months afterwards he collected money from the readers of his paper to provide a Christmas dinner for some hundreds of children in a great hall in the Commercial Road in the East End of London. Arthur Pearson was then inexperienced in philanthropy. The feast was too plentiful, and by the time the Christmas puddings arrived on the table the children had already eaten so much that the puddings were wasted. Arthur Pearson hated waste. It seemed to him that the Christmas dinner scheme was an unpractical form of philanthropy. He had discovered by experience that he could collect through *Pearson's Weekly* considerable sums of money to provide pleasure for poor children, and he determined that the pleasure should be complete and satisfying. So the famous Fresh Air Fund was started in the summer of 1892; and every year since, tens of thousands of

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children have had one real good day in the country.

In the early days of the *Daily Express* various members of the staff were commissioned each year to write appeals for the F.A.F. which were printed in various dailies and weeklies, and the surest way to win Arthur Pearson's favour was to write an effective appeal. His consideration for children was proved by an experience of my own during this same period of his life. On one occasion he discharged a reporter whom he met one afternoon in the office considerably the worse for drink. It was not the first offence, and the man had no reason to think himself hardly used. But his colleagues knew that he had four small children, and that, in the circumstances, he was hardly likely to find another job. We discussed the matter in the reporters' room, and I was deputed to see Arthur Pearson and ask him to reconsider his decision. I remember the interview very well. Arthur Pearson had an abrupt, staccato way of talking, a manner which I have always believed he carefully cultivated to protect himself from his own impulsive good nature. He asked me what I wanted, and I told him that I wanted to talk about So-and-so. He at once said the matter was finished, the man was sacked and that he damned well deserved it. Then I asked him if he knew about the four children. His manner immediately changed.

“Four children,” he repeated, “poor little devils.” Then he nodded his head and I was dismissed; but the reporter was not. He remained on the staff of the *Express* for years. In this connection, it is interesting to remember that when the idea of the Boy Scouts occurred to Sir Robert Baden Powell, the first man to whom he went was Arthur Pearson, who was immediately attracted by the scheme, by the sport of it, by its open-air atmosphere, and by the fact that it was sure to bring both discipline and interest to growing boys.

Arthur Pearson was a dominating, masterful employer, generally rather better than his word, certainly always just and sportsmanlike in his relations with the men who were depending on him for their livelihood. In his early days he had himself experienced the hardship that comes to struggling professional writers through waiting for money for accepted articles, and he was largely responsible for what is now almost the universal system of “Payment on acceptance.” Many years ago he said to one of the best known living short story-writers: “We live out of authors. When you have done your work you are entitled to your pay whether it has been published or not, and you shall have it. Do not forget that if at any time you want money when you have done your work, ask for it.”

In 1895 W. T. Stead published the horo-

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scope of Arthur Pearson in his paper *Borderland*, and this horoscope with Arthur Pearson's comments on it are a complete confirmation in almost every detail of my estimate of his character. The astrologer described him as a "quick, active, generous person, assiduous, contemplative, highly ingenious and inventive; possessing finesse, originality of thought, rapid succession of ideas; penetrating, opinionative, independent, candid, truthful, proud, slightly eccentric, sociable, pleasing, courteous, judicious, kind-hearted, self-willed and almost headstrong, obstinate and almost jealous." The astrologer added: "He is not inspired, enthusiastic, or terribly in earnest. He is not easily elated or depressed. I do not think spirituality has a marked place in his composition. He is philanthropic, but not prodigal."

Arthur Pearson agreed with the estimates that I have quoted, and he added the confession: "I am very fond of tunes, but detest music. I like a landscape by Leader, but portraits by old masters do not appeal to me." This is a singular confirmation of the limitations which I have emphasised. He said too: "I always try not to be rough on people; I love society in the ordinary acceptance of the term; I thoroughly enjoy being with a few friends, and my real friends are very few."

This, then, is the man, the story of whose life I have to tell—a strong man armed with self-

determination, self-assurance, eager curiosity and masterful energy; a man for whom difficulties only existed to be overcome, and for whom life was always a thrilling adventure; a man of limited imagination remote from the subtleties, unaffected by introspective problems; a great man in his devotion to the work to which he had put his hand, and in his incapacity to accept defeat; a man of courage and kindliness and sympathy, who hated meanness and whines and anything like sycophancy; the man who created St. Dunstan's, and did a magnificent work which no other living man could have done—a work which will cause his name to be called blessed for many generations to come; the man who will always be remembered as the Blind Leader of the Blind.

CHAPTER II

WINCHESTER AND *TIT-BITS*

CYRIL ARTHUR PEARSON was born on the 24th February 1866 at Wookey, near Wells, where his father, the Rev. Cyril Pearson, was then a curate. He was an only son, but he had three sisters, who all survive him. He was the great-grandson of the Rev. Henry Francis Lyte, the author of "Abide with Me." From Wookey his father went to Morden in Surrey, and in 1876 he was presented to the living of Drayton Parslow, in Buckinghamshire, near the Bedfordshire border. When he was ten years old Arthur Pearson was sent to Eagle House School at Wimbledon, where he remained for four years, afterwards going to Winchester, where his father had been educated.

In an obituary notice, the *Wykehamist* said :

"Of all Wykehamists of recent years there is no one who has been more conspicuous in the popular eye than Cyril Arthur Pearson ; there are few of whom Winchester has more reason to be proud. He used wickedly to say that he had learnt nothing at Winchester. But there

is something to be learnt at school more valuable than Latin and Greek; and may we not venture to claim that Pearson may have learnt something of his remarkable character from his sojourn among us? He was always the most cheery and buoyant 'socius' imaginable: in his Wykehamical comradeship may he not have learnt something of the joy of making other people happy, which was the main inspiration of his life?

"Pearson came to Culver House in January 1880. He was the son of a well-known Wykehamist, who twenty-five years before had been a leading member of our Lord's Eleven, and one of the best cover-points that even Winchester ever had. Arthur Pearson, like his father, was a keen lover of outdoor life.

"In the House, Pearson was always up to some merry prank or other; and was famous for telling the funniest stories night after night. Even before he left school he would eke out his scanty battlings by sending up some choice morsel to *Tit-Bits*. Also, if his school career had not been cut short, he might probably have followed his father into Lord's Eleven; for already at fifteen he had gained fame as a most tricky bowler among the Juniors.

"But his school prospects were suddenly cut short, when he was only just sixteen. His father was an Essex 'squarson' in the very worst days of Essex farming, and funds were insufficient."

Mr. Gerard Fiennes, the well-known naval writer, who was at Winchester with Arthur

Pearson, has been good enough to send me the following interesting recollection :

“ At the beginning of the Common Time, 1880, there arrived at Fearon’s a small dark boy in spectacles, with a curious jerky manner and equally jerky speech. He took no high place in the school ; but a certain alertness and intelligence bespoke character, and I think he was popular at once.

“ The following Short Half won him his nickname of ‘ Pigeon.’ It was at Commoner singing, and the presiding Prefect called out ‘ Beer Song.’ Pearson, nervously alert, thought he was called upon, and mounted the table amid roars of laughter. There he stood bewildered, jerking his head from side to side just like the bird from which he afterwards took his name.

“ He was too blind then to play games well ; but he was a fair bowler, and played for the Junior House. I remember on one occasion he was watching out on one of the pitches in Lavender Meads nearest New Field when a mighty hit to leg from Foreign Match sent the ball bounding towards him. Not having seen whence it came, he fielded it and spliced it in to the wicket-keeper of his own game to the intense indignation of the sweating fieldsman who was in chase of it.

“ He was a fair sprinter, and we trained him hard for Junior Hundred in next year’s Athlas ; but he fell ill and could not run.

“ For the rest, his career at Winchester showed a remarkable genius for getting into rows and getting out of them. His power of invention never failed him. But his school life

was short. His father was a country parson whose income depended upon a glebe farm. Agriculture was at its lowest depth of depression, and 'Pigeon' had to leave at the beginning of 1882. I don't think he was exactly cut out for public school life in those days. His mind was too adventurous."

Another old school-fellow says: "He was early discovered to be a promising bowler. Had his eyesight been better, I think he would have made a really fine cricketer. But he could not see well enough to bat or field. He also disclosed a good turn of speed for the hundred yards, and our House, which just then stood badly in need of athletic talent, itself began to train him like a Derby colt."

Arthur Pearson himself had no sort of respect for the English Public School. Many years after he had left Winchester he wrote:

"No boy is so badly equipped for his future as the English Public School boy. When I was at Winchester, three-quarters of an hour a week was all that was given to modern languages, whereas two-thirds of my time had to be devoted to getting a superficial knowledge of Latin and Greek that was never of any real use to me so far as I have been able to see. The English Public School boy was, in my day, taught almost nothing he needs to know and a rich assortment of things he doesn't need to know."

For some time he studied with his father

and zealously played cricket, hockey and lawn-tennis. At this time, too, Arthur Pearson learned to ride a high bicycle.

In October 1881 the late Sir George Newnes published the first number of *Tit-Bits*. The paper was an almost immediate success, and shortly after its start the publishing office was moved from Manchester to London. In the issue of May 31, 1884, the following announcement appeared on the front page of *Tit-Bits*:

AN EXTRAORDINARY PRIZE.

TENTH INQUIRY COLUMN COMPETITION.

Important Notice.

It is stated throughout the country that there are at the present moment

Over one hundred thousand clerks out of employment;

the large majority of whom, though constantly endeavouring to obtain work are unable to make a living. We therefore propose to put a SITUATION up to PUBLIC COMPETITION; and we offer as the

FIRST PRIZE

in the

TENTH INQUIRY COLUMN COMPETITION

A SITUATION

In the Offices of "Tit-Bits"

at a Salary of

£100 per Annum.

The said situation will be a permanent one, with prospect of increase, should the winner prove a trustworthy and competent person. It will be guaranteed for one year. The winning of the Prize will secure the Clerkship subject only to references as to honesty.

The Inquiry Competition entailed finding correct answers to ten questions printed in each of the next thirteen numbers of the paper. Arthur Pearson has himself told how he contrived to win the prize :

“ A short while before I had left Winchester and was waiting at home for a promised vacancy at a City bank. A clerkship in a bank did not appeal to me at all, so, to the rather thinly veiled disgust of my family, I announced my intention of trying for the *Tit-Bits* prize.

“ My father’s library contained more books of reference than would have been found in most country rectories, but they were quite inadequate when it came to answering the many varied questions which were set to competitors. Here two helpful factors coincided : I rode one of the high bicycles which were used in those days by people who were in a hurry and didn’t mind the risk of breaking their necks, and there was an excellent reference department in the Bedford Free Library, thirty miles away. So, three times a week I cycled to Bedford and back, and any one who reads this and who rode one of the clumsy, inefficient, solid-tyred machines of those days will bear me out that the distance was quite equal to a hundred and twenty miles on a modern machine.

“ The fact that three or four of the ten replies which I sent in were printed verbatim each week kept me supplied with encouragement, and finally I came out an easy winner.”

The energy of the man, years afterwards, to

be hailed as the greatest hustler on earth, was already evident in the boy who rode a high bicycle a hundred and eighty miles each week in order to gain his first chance in life. It may be interesting to print the questions which young Pearson answered.

“What substances when brought in contact produce intense cold?”

“What is the cause of ‘summer lightning’?”

“Do bishops of the Church of England hold their appointments for life?”

“Who first prepared natural arsenic for the purpose of making gold?”

“At what date does *modern* history commence?”

“What was the ‘Court of Conscience’?”

“What was the origin of duelling?”

“Who invented the first machine for embroidery?”

“When was the commencement of the legal year in England altered to the 1st January?”

“Who is said to have been detained on *Mount Ida* by the nails in his boots?”

“How much of the surface of England is owned by railway companies?”

“What was the origin of the phrase: ‘Solid men of Boston’?”

“What is the Eastern tradition as to the origin of the rose?”

“Why is the Temple (London) so called?”

“From what did ‘dogcarts’ receive their name?”

“What is ‘treasure trove’?”

“What was the origin of the Highland ‘kilt’?”

“What is ‘smoke money’?”

“Why did the Egyptians embalm their dead?”

“Why was the ‘Star Chamber’ so called?”

“What is the age of the earth?”

“What is pumice-stone?”

“Whence came the saying, ‘As straight as a die’?”

“What was the origin of ‘As tight as a lord’?”

“What is the cause of the low temperature which prevails at the bottom of deep oceans?”

“Why in the case of Serjeant-Major does the word ‘Major’ denote superiority, while in Major-General it denotes inferiority?”

“Who discovered the art of paper-making?”

“Has the oxygen in our atmosphere always been in the same proportion as at present?”

“From what fund are the incomes of the archbishops derived?”

“Who discovered Canada?”

“Do the ladies in attendance upon the Queen continue to hold their appointments notwithstanding a change of ministry?”

“Who is said to have drunk the ocean dry?”

“What general destroyed his ships, so that his soldiers must either conquer or die?”

“Name the ten animals (not of the race of man) said to have been received into Paradise?”

“By what means was a nine years’ drought in Egypt made to cease?”

“What is the average intensity of cold in the Arctic regions?”

“Who was the first ‘knight’?”

“What is meant by ‘Californian Dew’?”

“ When was the title ‘ Prince ’ first applied to the younger children of a sovereign ? ”

“ Who was the first man to receive a gift from Timon of Athens ? ”

“ Was a *Rose* ever used to mark ordnance in lieu of the present Government mark of a *Broad Arrow* ? ”

“ Who, according to Greek mythology, was the first woman ? ”

“ When was Edward iv. mistaken for a highwayman ? ”

“ What city surrendered to a dead general ? ”

“ What is said to be the origin of regimental scarlet facings ? ”

“ To what custom does Ben Jonson allude in the lines, ‘ Searching for things lost with a sieve and shears ’ ? ”

“ What bird is said to exercise the same kind of fascination over fish which a rattlesnake does over birds ? ”

“ What was the ancient Scotch assessment known as ‘ Rogue Money ’ ? ”

“ When were trade-marks first used ? ”

“ Where is the sword with which St. Paul was beheaded said to be preserved ? ”

“ What are the modern names of paper ? ”

“ What is the Irish legend of ‘ the blossom of youth ’ ? ”

“ What were the Seven Wonders of Corea ? ”

“ What was the origin of the saying, ‘ The Saddler of Bawtry ’ ? ”

“ What battle is known as the ‘ Battle of Herrings ’ ? ”

“ What is the origin of the coronet on the mitre of English archbishops ? ”

“What great tree is said to bind together heaven and earth ? ”

“What was the office of ‘Chamberlain of Giffen’ ? ”

“To whom was the title ‘Rose of the world’ given ? ”

“Who was the ‘garbler of Spices’ ? ”

“What were the ‘Treasures of Islam’ ? ”

“When was the ‘Trial of the Pyx’ established ? ”

“What was the origin of the manufacture of ‘bon-bons’ ? ”

“What was the ‘Catherine procession’ ? ”

“How many acres do the forests of Europe cover ? ”

“How many Bank of England notes would weigh 1 oz. ? ”

“Who was the ‘demon of vanity and dress’ ? ”

“Who was the ‘knight of the two swords’ ? ”

“Who was the originator of the theory that the earth was round ? ”

“Whence came the phrase, ‘Neither hawk nor buzzard’ ? ”

“What war is known as the ‘Peasant War’ ? ”

“Who was the inventor of the Panorama ? ”

“What plant is known as ‘Rosa Mariæ’ ? ”

“What is meant by the ‘Seven Wise Masters’ ? ”

“What weapon was called a ‘spontoon’ ? ”

“From whence arose the custom of carrying flags or standards in battle ? ”

“What is meant by the ‘Mystic Ladder’ ? ”

“What bird is said to hatch her eggs by gazing on them ? ”

“ Who was the angel of day and night ? ”

“ To whom did Milton refer in the lines :

‘ Queen that strove
To set her beauty’s praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended ’ ? ”

“ What is the difference between ‘ artists’ proof,’ ‘ four letter proof,’ and ‘ print ’ in reference to steel engravings ? ”

“ What is a ‘ patent ’ theatre ? ”

“ How many islands are there round the coast of Great Britain and Ireland ? ”

“ What are the four grades of society among the Hindoos ? ”

“ What is the longest distance a telephonic message has been sent ? ”

“ What is ‘ Horse-shoe Blackmail ’ ? ”

“ What is the full war strength of an English Army Corps ? ”

“ Who invented the punishment of flaying alive ? ”

“ Who is said to have passed through St. Patrick’s Purgatory in a dream ? ”

“ To what story does Longfellow refer in the lines :

‘ From the story of Osseo
Let learn the fate of Jesters ’ ? ”

“ What is the radius of the smallest curve which should be allowed on a railway ? ”

“ What is the steepest grade which should be allowed on a railway ? ”

“ When and by whom was England divided into counties ? ”

“ What regiment claims the privilege that their officers are not liable to be tried by court-martial ? ”

“ What are ‘ Literary Neckties ’ ? ”

“ How is the Japanese age counted ? ”

“ Who first foretold an eclipse of the sun ? ”

“ How is the height and velocity of clouds determined ? ”

“ Who invented the heliograph ? ”

“ When were harps first placed on Irish coins ? ”

“ What were the ‘ eight sorrows ’ of Ireland ? ”

“ What bird when disturbed on its nest is said to hiss like a serpent ? ”

“ What is the earliest known date of a bank note ? ”

“ Who invented the tricycle ? ”

“ Who were ‘ Cymon and Iphigenia ’ ? ”

“ What is the legend of the ‘ Tower of the Virgin ’ ? ”

“ How is it that the firing of heavy artillery causes rain to fall in the neighbourhood ? ”

“ What Roman family was awarded the name of ‘ left-handed,’ and why ? ”

“ Which is the most famous race of Arabian horses ? ”

“ What is meant by a ‘ Galway Jury ’ ? ”

“ When was the diving-bell first invented ? ”

“ Why is it considered unlucky to spill salt ? ”

“ What is the origin of the phrase, ‘ Paying the Piper ’ ? ”

“ What is the meaning of ‘ La Vendetta ’ ? ”

“ How many significant words can be formed out of the word ‘ Mediterranean ’ ? ”

“ Is black the universal emblem of mourning ? ”

“ By whom was the *kriegspiel*, or war game, invented ? ”

“ When was the Imperial Guard of France created ? ”

“ Who invented engravings ? ”

“ How many *bona fide* manufacturers are there in Great Britain ? ”

“ What is meant by ‘ Cross Benches ’ in Parliamentary language ? ”

“ Why do waves always form a curve similar to the indentation of the coast ? ”

“ What is the origin of the saying ‘ Spick and span new ’ ? ”

“ Where was Anne Boleyn buried ? ”

“ When was the monarchy of Russia founded ? ”

“ Who was ‘ Stella ’ of literary fame ? ”

“ Who composed the epitaph, ‘ O rare Ben Jonson ’ ? ”

“ When was Botany Bay first used as a penal settlement ? ”

“ When was the first regiment of Horse Guards raised ? ”

“ What is meant by ‘ Wandering about like a *Waterford Merchant* ’ ? ”

The questions were certainly difficult and comprehensive. The result of the competition was announced in *Tit-Bits* on September 26th. Out of the total of a hundred and thirty questions, Arthur Pearson had answered eighty-six correctly and had won the prize. Eighteen of the remaining answers were very good, eight were good, three were fair, and only three were absolutely incorrect.

Arthur Pearson came to London in September



1876, AGED 10.



WINCHESTER DAYS, 1879, AGED 13.

1884 and took furnished lodgings in Wimbledon. He was then just eighteen years and seven months old. He had absolutely no knowledge of journalism, but he was able to persuade George Newnes that he was a young man with ability and energy quite out of the ordinary. In April 1885 Pearson had become George Newnes' right-hand man. He was called the manager of the paper, and his work was sufficiently responsible and onerous for him to have a private secretary. This private secretary was Mr. Ernest Kessell, then a boy fresh from school, who remained with him without a break until the day of his death.

I quote Arthur Pearson's own account of his early days in the *Tit-Bits* office :

" Of course a mere schoolboy like I was had no business qualifications of any use, and it seemed to me at the time that my new-found employer was not very elated at the youthfulness and inexperience of his acquisition. Fortunately, I had during the months spent at home after leaving Winchester taught myself shorthand sufficiently well to be able to take dictation so long as I could get away and transcribe it without delay. I well remember the dire results of having to leave some letters to be transcribed the day after they had been dictated to me.

" So I helped the manager to cope with his correspondence, added up columns of figures for the cashier, aided the publisher to arrive at the

number of copies to be printed each week, and, above all, assisted the sub-editor, Mr. Peter Keary, who later on left Mr. Newnes with me.

“ So things went on for six months, and then the manager left with dramatic suddenness. I thought that I had gained sufficient knowledge of the business to enable me to do his work, and so I took courage in both hands and applied to Mr. Newnes for the position.

“ I can still hear the chuckle with which he greeted this, I am free to confess, rather overbold suggestion. However, no new manager was appointed, and I went on doing the job to the best of my ability.

“ Three months later I again applied for the position. This time Mr. Newnes talked the matter over with me seriously, and pointed out that a youth of my age could scarcely be expected to possess the qualifications needed for the management of so large a business. He said that he was still looking for a thoroughly suitable man, but I rather suspect that he was really trying me out. At all events, no new manager materialised, and three months later I got the coveted position.”

Before Arthur Pearson had joined the staff of *Tit-Bits* two other young men about his own age, both of them destined to be famous, were among George Newnes' contributors. One was Alfred Harmsworth, the late Viscount Northcliffe, and the other was Max Pemberton. Arthur Pearson has written :

“ At about the same time I made the acquaintance of two very interesting young men. They called at the office one afternoon, and each handed me a manuscript for consideration. I can recall these manuscripts quite clearly. Both were written on ruled copy-book paper. One in very distinctive handwriting, not too legible, was called ‘ Some Curious Butterflies,’ and its author was Alfred Harmsworth, now known the world over as Lord Northcliffe, and soon to start the publishing business which grew to such colossal dimensions.

“ The other manuscript, written with almost copper-plate neatness, was called ‘ Oddities of the Post Office,’ and its author was Max Pemberton, whose brilliant books have been enjoyed by millions. Both articles were accepted and printed in *Tit-Bits*, and both authors were, for a while, regular contributors. Alfred Harmsworth wrote for the firm a most interesting and instructive handbook, entitled *A Thousand Ways to Earn a Living*, which had a large sale.”

Mr. Pemberton says that in those early days, Arthur Pearson was very much the same man as he was when he had become a great newspaper magnate—entirely sure of himself, nervous, emphatic.

Arthur Pearson remained on the staff of *Tit-Bits* for nearly five years, during which time his salary grew by various increases to £350 a year.

He married in December 1887. He was then under twenty-two years of age. He and

his wife first lived over a tailor's shop in the Ridgeway, Wimbledon. Before he was twenty-four he was the father of two daughters. £350 a year, even in the days of cheap prices, was not a sufficient income to ensure comfort for his family, and in addition to his work for *Tit-Bits* Arthur Pearson spent practically all his leisure in free-lance work for other publications. He left among his papers a curious record of this free-lance work from January 1st to June 30th, 1889, which runs as follows :

HALF-YEAR, JAN. 1 TO JUNE 30, 1889

Articles written	84
Articles dispatched	251
Articles accepted	58
Articles printed	36
Money received	£44 0 0
Money owing	£50 7 0
Total	£94 7 0
Average price per article	£1 12 6
Average number of articles sent for one accepted	4½
21 articles out, of which I know nothing, so it may be assumed that 5 of them are taken, which makes	£8 2 6
Total earned is	£102 9 6
Stamps	£2 9 6
£100 nett gain.	

The difference between the number of articles written and the number dispatched will be easily understood by every working journalist. It means, of course, that many of the articles were dispatched over and over again only to be returned. With this memorandum is a detailed

list of the names of the articles that Arthur Pearson wrote, and their fate. From this I find that on January 12th he sent an article called "Lights" to the *Globe*. It was returned. On January 24th it was sent to *Cassell's Saturday Journal*. It was returned. On February 15th it went to the *Evening Standard* and was accepted. An article called "Marriage Customs" went to the *Lady's Treasury* on January 10th and was returned. It went to *Young Folks* on February 16th and was returned. It went to *Cassell's Saturday Journal* on February 17th and was accepted. "A King of the Forest" was sent to *Cassell's Saturday Journal* on January 9th and returned; to *Young Folks* on January 21st and returned; *Scraps* on February 3rd and returned. Then Pearson seems to have given it up.

"Ill Winds" began its journey with a trip to the *St. James's Gazette* on January 11th. It was returned, and apparently remained for some time in its writer's desk. On February 11th it made its second voyage and was accepted by *Cassell's Saturday Journal*.

An article called "Laughter" went to *Temple Bar* on January 12th and was returned; to the *Globe* on February 13th and was returned; to *All the Year Round* on February 15th and was returned. After some weeks it was sent to the provinces to the *Preston Herald* and was again returned. On April 24th it went to *Wit and*

Wisdom with the same fate, and there its journeys apparently ended.

Arthur Pearson's persistence is shown by his refusal to accept defeat and by his habit of trying every possible market before regarding his goods as unsaleable. The range of subjects about which he wrote is extraordinary. Here are the articles on one page of his notebook: "Suspended Animation," "Fireplaces," "Dust," "Ancestors' Travels," "Begging Letters," "Duelling," "Animals and Music," "Massage," "Royal Authors," "Steeple-Jacks' Work," "Mistaken Criticisms," "Perfumes," "Echoes," "Rats," "American Song Birds," and "Gout."

The boy journalist interested in natural history is very obvious in the titles of his articles, and there can hardly have been a newspaper or periodical editor in London whom he did not bombard. In addition to the publications I have already mentioned, he sent his articles to the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Daily News*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Leisure Hour*, *Chatter-Box*, *Longmans Magazine*, the *Star*, the *Times*, *Cornhill Magazine*, the *Graphic*, the *Literary World*, *Chambers's Journal*, the *Sheffield Telegraph*, the *Newcastle Chronicle*, the *Liverpool Post*, the *Bedford Observer*, the *Irish Times*, the *Lady*, *Sporting and Dramatic*, the *Queen*, and *London Society*. Experienced

journalists will see in this record the certain promise of the success that always follows the refusal to be beaten and the indomitable spirit which many years afterwards made Arthur Pearson the conqueror of misfortune and the benefactor of the blind.

At no time of his life was Arthur Pearson ever a distinguished writer, but I have read a good many of the articles that he wrote in his early days and they are certainly clearly expressed, deft journalism. It must be remembered that *Tit-Bits* was his school, and *Tit-Bits* was and is a periodical devoted to anecdote and fact and not to the expression of opinion. It was therefore quite natural and inevitable that Arthur Pearson's own writing should consist of carefully collected facts and interesting anecdotes. As a specimen of his work, I select an extract from an article of his on "Rats" that appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* of May 1889 :

"The best course to take, when the extermination of a colony of rats becomes a necessity, is to make them help to destroy one another in the following manner. A number of tubs, proportionate to the quantity of rats in the place which it is desired to rid of them, should be placed about, the middle of each occupied by a brick standing on end. The bottom of these tubs should be covered with water to such a depth that about an inch of the

brick projects above it. The top of the tub should be covered with stout brown paper, upon which a dainty meal of bacon-rind and other scraps dear to the rat palate figures—a sloping board giving the rodents facilities for partaking of it. The feast should be renewed for several nights, so that all the rats in the neighbourhood may get to know of the food which is placed within such easy reach. When it is judged that this policy has been pursued long enough, the centre of the brown paper should be cut in such a manner that any rat venturing upon it will be precipitated into the cold water below. It might be thought that the result of this would be to capture a rat, or at the most two, for every tub prepared ; but no such meagre reward for the trouble that has been taken need be feared. The first rat to find his trust abused and himself struggling in the water at the bottom of a tub, soon recovers sufficiently from the shock to ascertain that there is a little island of refuge, on to which he clambers, and squeals his loudest for help. Now, the squeal of a rat in trouble attracts every one of his kind within hearing, and very few moments will elapse before the victim of misplaced confidence is joined by one of his friends. The newcomer is as quick to discover the chance of escape from a watery grave that the brick offers as was the original victim ; but when he attempts to avail himself of its presence, it becomes apparent that there is not room for more than one upon it. The first-comer resists with tooth and nail the efforts of his companion in trouble to dispossess him of his coign of vantage, and the squeals which form an accom-

paniment to the fight for a footing upon the brick attract more rats to the scene of the tragedy. The conflict waxes more and more furious as rat after rat topples into the water, and, by morning, bedraggled corpses in plenty will gladden the eyes of the man whose losses at the teeth of rats have induced him to adopt this means of thinning their numbers. Some years ago the plan described above was tried in a City warehouse, with the result that more than three thousand rats were destroyed in a single night."

In 1889 George Newnes, having firmly established *Tit-Bits* as a paying property, was looking out for other worlds to conquer. He was convinced that a popular magazine, illustrated as well as *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and the other American magazines would be sure of success in England. Mr. Newnes, as he then was, got into communication with W. T. Stead, at that time the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and certainly the most famous journalist in the world. For some time Stead had been working out the scheme of a sixpenny monthly on novel and attractive lines, and he sent this scheme to Mr. Newnes. The idea was the *Review of Reviews*. Stead had planned that the first half of the periodical should consist of a specially written summary of the month and other original articles, and that the second part should be filled with summaries of the most interesting

and important articles in the graver monthlies. In December 1889, four weeks after Stead had sent his scheme to Mr. Newnes, the first copy of the *Review of Reviews* was published with Newnes as the publisher, Stead as the editor, and Arthur Pearson, then under twenty-four, as business manager.

Ever since he had come to London, Arthur Pearson had been a prodigious worker. Long before he left the Newnes business he acquired the habit of working in the train during the journey from Wimbledon to Waterloo, and on the return journey in the evening. His eyes were a constant trouble, and I suppose that there can be no question that his subsequent blindness was hastened, if it was not caused, by the strain that he put on his eyes in the days of his struggle. He used to carry an ingenious little electric light outfit, the bulb being fixed in the buttonhole of his coat. He always walked from Waterloo to the office and from the office to Waterloo, and he felt that the walk had been wasted if he did not during the journey discover at least two subjects for a popular article.

The part that he took in launching the *Review of Reviews* was new work for him, and another opportunity for demonstrating his ability as well as his tireless energy. Almost immediately after the *Review of Reviews* was launched in England, Arthur Pearson made his first journey to America to arrange for the *Review*

to be issued in the United States. He stayed there for only a few weeks, and on his way back to England he contracted a severe attack of congestion of the lungs which laid him up for some three months.

When he recovered, Arthur Pearson felt that the time had come when he might properly demand a considerable increase in his salary.

Tit-Bits was a great success, making very large profits, but his salary was still only £350 a year. He suggested to Mr. Newnes that he was worth far more, but his employer was not of the same mind. By this time Arthur Pearson was the father of a family. He had moved from the lodgings over the tailor's shop to a quaint little house on Wimbledon Common, called "Rheola." His expenses were increasing, and he reasonably felt that his earnings were not commensurate with his ability and with his capacity. As there seemed no prospect of earning a larger income with Mr. Newnes, he determined to leave him and to set up business on his own account. He had no capital and few friends, but he believed in himself. He left the Newnes' firm at the end of June 1890, after an engagement that had lasted for nearly six years. Three weeks afterwards the first number of *Pearson's Weekly* was issued.

CHAPTER III

HIS OWN MASTER

THE late Peter Keary and Ernest Kessell accompanied Arthur Pearson from *Tit-Bits* and aided him in the establishment of Pearson's Limited. He was financed by Mr. Stephen Mills, whom he had met while playing lawn-tennis, and who advanced £3000 for launching the new venture. Offices were taken in Temple Chambers, and the first number of *Pearson's Weekly* was published on July 26th, 1890. Each copy of the paper carried a free Railway Insurance Policy of £1000, and under the title was printed the motto, which is still the *Pearson's Weekly* motto, "To Interest, to Elevate, to Amuse." The first column of the first page was devoted to an article headed "With the Editor's Compliments" and was, of course, written by Arthur Pearson himself. He said :

"Though a certain amount of anxiety as to the nature of its reception must necessarily attend the issue of a new periodical, the Editor of *Pearson's Weekly* owns to a feeling of confidence in placing his first number before the reading public.

“ There is always room at the top, and *Pearson's Weekly* will, it is hoped, prove to be conducted with such ability as to ensure a position at the very head of the numerous periodicals which aim to supply a want not met by weekly newspapers. It has been planned with a view of giving the best pennyworth of sound literature, presented in attractive form, that can possibly be produced.

“ The intrinsic literary merits of the paper are supported by Railway Insurance infinitely more liberal than any at present before the public, and by an additional insurance offer made to the hundreds of thousands who seek health and pleasure upon the wheel. It is hoped that the methods by which we seek to make the paper known from the first in every town and village of the three kingdoms will commend themselves to all sections of the public.

“ While guessing competitions and others of an unhealthy tendency will be rigidly excluded, frequent opportunities will be given to the readers of *Pearson's Weekly* to compete for valuable prizes. As the circulation of the paper grows, a constantly increasing amount will be set aside for these competitions, and care will be taken to arrange them that all readers may have an opportunity for exercising their perseverance and ingenuity in a pleasant and profitable manner.

“ ‘ To Interest, to Elevate, to Amuse ’ is our motto ; and no pains will be spared to make this absolutely the most interesting paper in the world. Lovers of pure fiction will find their tastes amply catered for, and from title to

imprint no word or suggestion will ever appear that is capable of giving offence to the most fastidious.

* “*Pearson's Weekly* will be of equal interest to men, women and elder children of every class, creed, and profession. It will appeal to rich and poor, to master and servant, to parent and child. As it is the biggest, so its conductors will aim to make it the best of all existing periodicals of its kind.

“It will be our object to impart to the pages of this journal a higher tone than at present exists in the class of literature to which it belongs, without detracting in any way from its interesting and amusing features.

“Those responsible for the contents of *Pearson's Weekly* have been engaged for years past in editing and managing a phenomenally successful paper, and the experience in the tastes of the public which they have thus gained will be utilised in the production of a periodical which shall be second to none.

“We will ask those who approve of the tone and character of this journal to be kind enough, not only to give it a good word, but also to inquire for it assiduously at news-vendors and bookstalls. There are so many papers in existence that a new one can only hope to gain swift popularity by the kind assistance of those who feel interested in it, and as we shall print very large issues from the first, no news-vendor need be without an ample supply.”

This editorial manifesto has just the *naïveté* that one would expect from a clever, ambitious boy of twenty-four. Arthur Pearson had been

brought up in a home of a none too wealthy clergyman, and therefore, perhaps, it is not surprising that in the first number of his own paper he should start a competition for clergymen and ministers, with annuities as prizes. By an odd chance, in the first number of *Pearson's Weekly*, Arthur Pearson wrote an article which he called "Curiosities of Blindness." It is so remarkable, that a man who was himself to lose his sight more than twenty years afterwards should have written an article on blindness in the first paper that he controlled, that it seems of sufficient interest to reproduce the article in these pages. I am particularly struck by the first sentence :

"Appalling as the deprivation of sight may be, it is not without some remarkable compensations. Other faculties, both of intellect and of sense, often seem to gain by it ; and Dufau, a French writer, affirms that the blind seldom become imbecile, and still less frequently insane. Profound thinkers practically admit that vision interferes somewhat with deep cogitation. Malebranche, when he wished to think intensely, used to close his window shutters in the day time, excluding every ray of light ; and, for a like reason, Democritus *is said* to have put out his eyes in order that he might philosophise the better. Speaking on this point, M. Dufau says : 'When we wish to increase our power of attention we shut our eyes, thus assuming artificial blindness.' Diderot used often to talk

with his eyes closed, and at such times became sublimely eloquent. There was lately living, in the county of York, a gentleman of fortune who, though totally blind, was an expert archer, 'so expert,' says our informant, 'that out of twenty shots with the long bow he was far my superior. His sense of hearing was so keen that when a boy behind the target rang a bell, the blind archer knew precisely how to aim the shaft.'

"The tenacity of the memory of the blind is well known. This characteristic faculty is, according to Father Charlevoix, turned to good account in Japan, where the public records of the empire are committed to memory by chosen blind men.

"Men of genius have sometimes thrown off some of the worst disabilities of blindness. Genius ever devises ways and means of its own. It has a thousand little contrivances unknown to the ordinary student, who is content enough to travel along the beaten road which others have fashioned for him. Saunderson's, the blind mathematician, whole machinery for computing was a small piece of deal, divided by lines into a certain number of squares, and pierced at certain angles with holes large enough to admit a metal pin. With this simple board and a box of pins he made all his calculations; yet in 1711 he was the friend of Sir Isaac Newton, and by his interest was elected Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. Thus also it was with Huber, the blind philosopher of Geneva. His discoveries in the honeyed labours of bees have equalled if not surpassed those of any other one student of nature. It remained for Huber

not only to corroborate truths which others had partially discovered, but also to detect and describe minute particulars which had escaped even the acute observation of Swammerdam. It is true that others supplied him with eyes, but he furnished them with thought and intellect—*he saw with their eyes*. Thus he clearly proved that there are two distinct sets of bees in every hive, honey gatherers and the wax makers and nurses ; that the larvæ of working bees can, by a course of diet, be changed to queens. Thus, also, he accurately described the sanguinary conflicts of rival queens, the recognition of old companions or of Royalty by use of the antennæ ; thus he explained the busy hum and unceasing vibration of wing ever going on in the hive as being necessary for due ventilation. One of the last incidents in the old man's life that seemed to rouse and interest him, was the arrival of a present of stingless bees from their discoverer, Captain B. Hall.

“ It is the union of diligence and genius which has made so many a blind man famous among his brethren with eyes ; not only the head to conceive, but the hand to carry out and achieve, in its own way, and plan of wisdom and of beauty. Thus Metcalf, the blind guide and engineer, constructed roads through the wilds of Derbyshire ! Thus Davidson ventilated the deepest coal-mines, and lectured on the structure of the eye ; as did Dr. Moyes on chemistry and optics ! Thus Blacklock, poet and musician, master of four languages besides his own, wrote both prose and poetry with elegance and ease ; thus, nearer to our own time, Holman, the traveller, has made himself a name far beyond

the shores of Great Britain. We know not what Saundersons or Hubers the present generation is to see. One name, equally great, in another path of fame it already has: Prescott, the historian of *Ferdinand and Isabella, Mexico, and Peru*, etc., who, though not blind, has a defect of the eyes which prevents him from reading and writing, but whose literary labours have, nevertheless, delighted and instructed thousands both in the Old and New World.

“Coleridge remarks that ‘a diseased state of an organ of sense will perpetually tamper with the understanding, and perhaps, at last, overthrow it.’ But when one organ is obliterated, the mind applies some other to a double use. Some ten years back, at Sowerby, I met a man perfectly blind from infancy. His chief amusement was fishing on the wild, uneven banks of the Eden, and up the difficult mountain streams. His friend, also stone blind, knew every gate and stile of the district. John Gough of Kendal, blind, is not only a mathematician, but an infallible botanist and zoologist, correcting mistakes of keen sportsmen as to birds and vermin. His face is all one eye. The eyes of Moyes, although he was totally blind, were not insensible to intense light. Colours were not distinguished by him, but felt. Red was disagreeable; he said it was ‘like the grating of a saw,’ while green was very pleasant, and similar to ‘a smooth surface’ when touched. In some instances blindness seems to have gifted the sufferer with new powers. A Dr. Guyse lost his sight in the pulpit, while he was at prayer, before the sermon, but nevertheless managed to preach as usual. An old lady of

the congregation, hearing him deplore his loss, thus strove to comfort him : ‘ God be praised,’ said she, ‘ that your sight is gone. I never heard your reverence preach so powerful a sermon in my life.’

“ The detection of colour by the touch of the blind is a disputed point. Several anecdotes are told of blind persons who had the power of discriminating colours by the touch ; but if the testimony of a large body of blind children can be relied on, the detection of colour is utterly beyond their reach. Saunderson’s power of detecting by his *finger* or *tongue* a counterfeit coin which had deceived the *eye* of a connoisseur, is a totally different question. We are hardly aware how much of our dexterity in the use of the eye arises from incessant practice. Those who have been relieved of blindness at an advanced, or even an early period of life, have often been found to recur to the old and more familiar sense of touch in preference to sight, especially during the first few months after receiving their sight. Coleridge mentions a most remarkable instance of a blind man at Hanover who possesses so keen a touch as to be able to read with his fingers books of *ordinary print*, if printed—as most German books are—on coarse paper.”

Other contributions from the editor’s pen in No. 1 of *Pearson’s Weekly* were—“ London Birds ” (an article which his notebook shows made many journeys before he printed it himself), “ Curious Pipes,” “ Does Education Diminish Crime ? ” and the “ Story of Domestic

Lighting." For a good many weeks his own writing was equally voluminous. In addition, he supervised the business side of his new venture, incidentally, as he remembered in later years, making a tour of the entire kingdom, visiting every newsagent of importance, sleeping often in third-class railway carriages, and writing in the train articles and stories which were posted to the office.

Arthur Pearson was a young father, devoted to children. In the second number of his paper there appeared the following announcement: "We propose to set aside the sum of £10 weekly for the next four weeks certain, possibly for longer, to be awarded each week to the married reader of *Pearson's Weekly* who first informs us that he is the happy father of twins. Applications may be made personally or by letter or by telegram. It must be verified by a doctor's certificate. Of course the auspicious event which entitles one of the married men who reads this paper to the sum of £10 must have taken place after the publication of each issue—that is to say, after nine o'clock on Thursday morning in each week, commencing Thursday, July 31st."

Arthur Pearson offered two guineas a column for original contributions, a very fair average rate for 1890, and he announced that "we do not require any hashed up matter of the epitaphs or curious wagers style."

Over a quarter of a million copies were sold of the first number of *Pearson's Weekly*.

In the third number a page was devoted to "Home Notes," and the idea of this page was subsequently developed into the weekly paper bearing the same name. The greater part of these early issues was written by Arthur Pearson and Peter Keary. Pearson used to arrive at the office early in the morning and work at the highest possible pressure the whole day long, taking bundles of papers home with him to read in the train. But the moment he arrived at Wimbledon his working day was finished. He was able to work as hard as he did through his characteristic ability, which I have already emphasised, to drop the curtain on any occupation, however insistent, and, for the time, to forget all about it.

The early Prize Competitions in *Pearson's Weekly* were ingenious and original. One prize was offered to the person with the longest name, and was won by Miss Marie George Ethel Victoria Eve Eugenie Beatrice Cleopatra Cordelia Warren, of Bolton, Lancashire. This was a simple matter, but in October of its first year *Pearson's Weekly* was far more ambitious, and offered its women readers a prize of £100 a year for life and a good husband. The editor invited young women between the ages of eighteen and thirty and unmarried men between the ages of twenty-one and forty to communicate with him with

preventative for influenza was "some stuff made from the eucalyptus tree." This gave Pearson a great idea. He sent out and bought all the eucalyptus oil he could put his hands on, and a staff of fifty commissionaires was employed squirting the oil through scent sprays on to the copies of *Pearson's Weekly* as they came off the printing machine.

In 1899, Pearson began to use the slogan, "If you see it in *Pearson's Weekly*, it is so," a boast that was afterwards borrowed by another and very different periodical.

But despite the enthusiasm of its editor and its very considerable circulation it seemed inevitable after a few months that the existence of *Pearson's Weekly* must come to an untimely end. Mr. Stephen Mills saw his £3000 swiftly disappearing, and naturally grew apprehensive and worrying. Arthur Pearson's splendid courage did not fail him, and he at once agreed to dissolve the partnership and to pay Mr. Mills five per cent. interest on his money until it was repaid. I do not imagine that the capitalist had any great hopes of receiving the interest for very long or of ever seeing his capital again. Then somehow or the other more money had to be found. Arthur Pearson was on friendly terms with one of the principal managers of Messrs. Smith & Son, and this man went to Sir William Ingram, the proprietor of the *Illustrated London News*, told him about Arthur Pearson

emphasised his qualities, asserted his belief that his paper was sure of success if he could tide over the next few months, and suggested that Sir William should agree to find the necessary money. Sir William Ingram flatly refused. He knew nothing about the *Pearson's Weekly* style of journalism. He was not interested, and he was absolutely disinclined to risk his money. But Arthur Pearson's friend was persistent. If Sir William Ingram would not finance the paper, would he see young Arthur Pearson, talk to him, and give him helpful advice? To this suggestion Sir William Ingram somewhat grudgingly assented and a meeting was arranged. Sir William at once told Arthur Pearson that it was hopeless to expect money from him. "I advise you," he said, "to try and persuade Mr. Newnes to give you back your old position. You are quite a young man, I suppose without any responsibilities, and you ought to be able to live on a comparatively small salary." "I beg your pardon," said Arthur Pearson, "I am by no means without responsibilities. I have a wife and two daughters to keep." "Well," said Sir William, "I have a wife and two sons to keep. My sons are at Winchester." "I was at Winchester," said Arthur Pearson, and so great is the freemasonry of the public schools that Sir William, himself an old Wykehamist, began to be interested for the first time. He looked through a copy of *Pearson's Weekly*,

which he had never seen before, discussed its features, and at last offered to join Pearson. He would provide £3000 to be a first five per cent. charge on the business for half the profits. Without a moment's hesitation Arthur Pearson refused the offer. I know nothing in his life that more clearly demonstrates his immense belief in himself and his unshakable confidence in ultimate success. He would not, he said, give the control of his business to any one for any price. Remember that the business was likely to last only a few days more, that Sir William Ingram was by no means eager to come to his help, and that his chances of finding the money elsewhere were practically non-existent.

Sir William Ingram was impressed by his audacity and offered to take forty-nine per cent., leaving Pearson fifty-one per cent. and, consequently, the control. This second offer was also refused. Mr. Peter Keary had thrown up his position with the Newnes firm and he also must be looked after and a percentage of possible profits must be reserved for him, and in the end Sir William Ingram also consented to this. It was really a very magnificent stroke of business for the Ingrams. Before half the £3000 was called up, *Pearson's* was a money-making concern. Six years afterwards it was converted into a limited liability company with a capital of over £400,000—£250,000 preference shares and £150,000 ordinary shares—and for thirty years the Ingrams

have received a very large income for a deal which really cost nothing, since the money advanced was afterwards repaid.

Soon after he had made his business arrangement with Sir William Ingram, Arthur Pearson started the Missing Word Competition, the immense success of which gave his paper its great circulation. Just before the announcement of this contest, weekly prizes were offered to those readers of *Pearson's Weekly* who correctly counted the letters of a certain page of the paper. The entrance fee for this competition was one shilling, and all the money that was received was divided among the competitors who were right. This competition was not a very great success, but it suggested the new and more audacious scheme. On December 12th, 1891, the following announcement appeared in *Pearson's Weekly*:

“Some readers are complaining that they have not time to go in for the Counting Competition, while others, who live in remote country districts, say they do not get the paper early enough in the week to enable them to compete. So we this week try, as an experiment, another form of contest, with an entrance fee, but not necessitating any prolonged work.

“On the front page are some verses, entitled ‘The World would be better.’ The last word in the fourth line of the second verse is omitted. Readers who wish to enter this competition must cut out the front page, fill in this word, write their

names and addresses along the foot of the page, and send it, with a postal order for one shilling, to reach us at latest by first post on Friday, December 11th, the envelope marked **WORD**.

“The correct word is in the hands of Messrs. Slade, Lewis, Slade, Chartered Accountants, Wardrobe Chambers, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C., enclosed in an envelope sealed with our seal. Their statement with regard to it will appear with the result of the competition, in our issue for the week after next.

“The whole of the money received in entrance fees will be divided amongst those competitors who fill in the last word correctly.

“Competitors must please fold their papers in such a manner that the word filled in appears without the page having to be unfolded. They must also please put pages and postal orders separately in the envelopes. These two little points will save us much valuable time.

“It is hoped that competitions will be posted as early in the week as possible. Members of the same family may compete if they like, and any one may send as many attempts as they choose, provided that each one is accompanied by a postal order.”

The verse from which the word was omitted was as follows :

If men dealt less in stocks and lands,
And more in bonds and deeds fraternal ;
If Love's work had more willing hands
To link this world with the
If men stored up Love's oil and wine,
And on bruised human hearts would pour it ;
If “ yours ” and “ mine ”
Would one combine,
The world would be the better for it.

Eight hundred and fifteen people entered for the competition and four hundred and sixty-three were correct. Only two words—Supernal and Eternal—were possible. The total amount received was £40, 15s., and each of the winners received one and ninepence. In the third competition only eighty people entered and the £4 received was divided between twenty-two winners.

The first substantial entry was for No. 11, when eighty-five winners received eleven and sixpence, and it was not until seventeen weeks passed that the number of entries exceeded 2000. The next jump was in competition No. 22, when the number reached over 5000, and 300 winners each received seventeen and ninepence. The contest grew steadily until No. 41, which produced an entry of over 10,000. In No. 44, 22,000 people sent a shilling each, and 990 received £1, 3s. Next week 446 people each received £5, 4s. 6d., as the result of nearly 49,000 entries. Then the boom began. Three weeks later 77,000 people entered, and in No. 50 the total number of shillings received was 137,892. In the next three contests the figures were amazing—No. 51, 217,389 entries; No. 52, 316,508 entries, and No. 53, 473,574 entries, representing £23,628.

It was at this stage that steps were taken by the authorities to test the legality of MISSING WORD competitions. Of course the proprietors

of other periodicals had realised the value of the competition and had started similar competitions. The authorities took action against one of these papers, and the magistrate—Sir John Bridge—decided at Bow Street Police Court that the competition was a lottery.

Immediately this decision was made known Arthur Pearson wrote to the Public Prosecutor telling him that he proposed to finish the competitions that were announced in the current numbers of his various papers, and in the numbers with which he had already gone to press, and then to end the matter altogether.

A letter was received from the City Solicitor requesting him not only to stop the competition immediately, but to return all moneys that had been sent in by competitors. All the money received in contest No. 53, amounting to nearly £24,000, was impounded by the Court, pending a decision in the Court of Chancery. Owing to the Christmas Vacation the matter was held up for a time, but finally, in February 1893, Mr. Justice Stirling was called on to decide whether the competitions were lotteries, and, if so, what was to become of the money subscribed by competitors. After an exhaustive examination the judge decided that this and similar competitions did amount to lotteries and were, therefore, illegal. The missing word game finished, but it had admirably served its purpose.

The enormous success of the Missing Word Competition compelled Arthur Pearson to hire much larger offices. The scores of clerks engaged in opening the letters and sorting the answers to the competition were housed in the building in Henrietta Street, which afterwards became the offices of the Company.

A quarter of a million copies were sold of the first number of *Pearson's Weekly*. During 1891 the circulation was increased to some extent by an ingenious advertising scheme which caused Pearson's Pipes, Pearson's Cigars, Pearson's Soap, Pearson's Puzzle, Pearson's Patent Penholder to be put on the market, and the Missing Word Competition gave the circulation a tremendous lift, a large part of which has been permanently held.

In 1890 Pearson moved from his Wimbledon Common house to the Bungalow, Shere. Twelve months later he took a much larger house called Round Down at Gomshall, which he afterwards bought, making many alterations in the house and building new stables. There was a cottage in the grounds of Round Down, and this was used for the entertainment of members of his staff. Every week-end six or eight of his employees went down to the cottage and were given a thoroughly good time, the whole of the expenses being met by C. A. P. While his staff was very small, Arthur Pearson took the keenest possible interest in their personal

affairs, and even in later days, when the number of men and women in his employ could be counted by hundreds, he maintained personal relations with as many of them as was possible.

Arthur Pearson stopped at Round Down until 1895. In that year he rented Catteshall Manor, Godalming, and in the next year a much larger place in the same neighbourhood called Broadwater.

In 1897 he married Miss Ethel Fraser, the present Lady (Arthur) Pearson, and he bought Frensham Place, Farnham. By this time, barely seven years from the launching of *Pearson's Weekly*, Arthur Pearson had become a comparatively wealthy man. Many new papers had been added to his original publication. *Home Notes*, the first of the series of papers intended for middle-class women, was founded in 1894, the idea being taken from the woman's page in the early numbers of *Pearson's Weekly*. *Pearson's Magazine* was started in 1896. *M.A.P.*, for many years a great success under the editorship of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, began in 1897, and the *Royal Magazine* in 1898. Among the more interesting publications of the Pearson firm in later years are the *Novel Magazine*, the first English purely fiction magazine, started in 1905, and the *Smallholder*, a practical countryman's paper, started in 1910.

In 1897 Arthur Pearson was thirty-one,

and he felt justified in at least partially retiring from business and devoting himself to the open-air country life which he had always loved.

In the autumn of 1893 Arthur Pearson went to America for the second time, mainly to visit the Chicago Exhibition. He described his experiences in a series of articles which appeared in *Pearson's Weekly* under the title of "Westward Ho." In the final article he summarised what appeared to him to be the outstanding American characteristics, and the following were some of his impressions :

"Were I asked to describe the inhabitants of the United States in a single sentence I should say they were a nation of fishermen. Whenever you come in sight of a piece of water, be it river, lake, or creek, you are almost certain, provided that there are any people in the district at all, to see some one or other fishing there. The average American country road is simply a track such as one finds over a Surrey common or a Yorkshire moor.

"The greatest wonder of America, and, indeed, I should think of the world, which is man's handiwork, is the city of Chicago."

It was very characteristic of Arthur Pearson that, during this visit, the thing that most struck him in America was the absence of flower gardens.

Frensham Place was certainly not a typical

English country-house, nor could Arthur Pearson be regarded as a typical English country squire, yet he lived an entirely open-air life. He was up early in the morning and out almost all day. All his later writing was done by dictation, and the library was perhaps the least used room in the house. In his early years he had been absolutely a non-smoker, but he never did anything by halves, and at the time he arrived at Frensham he had quite characteristically become a very heavy smoker indeed. He took little or no part in the social life of the neighbourhood, preferring to bring down his own friends from London. He used, however, often to drive over to Hindhead to visit the late Grant Allen, with whom he would go for long tramps across the Surrey commons, Grant Allen's deep knowledge of natural history making him an intensely interesting companion. Arthur Pearson had a number of horses in his stables at Frensham, and there was hardly a day when he did not ride through the pine woods. By the Frensham time he had given up the eccentric driving that amused him at Shere, but he still drove a tandem and four-in-hand. He had a boat on Frensham pond and frequently sailed and bathed there. All through his life he was a particularly strong swimmer. There was a large ballroom at Frensham Place, and Arthur Pearson was an excellent dancer and loved dancing. He disliked chess, mainly because his father had been

something of a chess expert and he had been bored to death by the game when he was a boy.

Soon after he bought Frensham Place, Arthur Pearson built a large riding school, the largest covered school in the country. He had started breeding hackneys, and the school was, at first, intended for the training of the horses which he bred, and with which he gained many first prizes at shows all over England. The riding school was afterwards divided into two parts, one half being used as a covered lawn-tennis court and the other half as a squash court.

A little later in the Frensham days he became very keen on golf, and he laid out a private course in his own grounds. Another of his passing crazes was bee-keeping, and he planted huge hedges of lavender at Frensham particularly for the benefit of his bees. He was always fond of dogs, and, when he lost his sight, he had a pet squirrel for which he had a certain affection.

At this time—the end of the nineties—he was still in the early thirties and had come to the end of what may be regarded as the first period of his life. He had established an extremely successful and ever-growing business that no longer made any great demand on his time. He was able to devote himself to the country life which he always loved. He was extraordinarily alert, tremendously alive, judging

everything and everybody for himself, a courteous and delightful host, particularly liking to have young people about him, always eagerly curious and abounding in energy. In this *entr'acte* of his career he was always interested in something, but rarely interested in anything for very long. That was his character. It was shown by his passing from one favourite game to another favourite game. It was shown in a dozen instances, as, for example, when he bought an elaborate microscope which for a time amused him for hours every day and then for years remained covered and forgotten. To complete the picture of the man, it should be mentioned that while there was a remarkable collection of ivories at Frensham Place, there were no fine pictures in the house. Perhaps the most interesting thing there was a section of a huge tree, from the petrified forest of Arizona, which Arthur Pearson bought at the Chicago Exhibition. On leaving Frensham he made a gift of it to the Natural History Museum, where it is placed in the central hall.

When he lived there, Frensham Place was a very comfortable house. Arthur Pearson always loved comfort, and he was one of the first men who insisted on having a comfortable office. He had no patience with the stupidity of business men who spend the best part of their lives in their offices and do not take the trouble to make the offices pleasant places in which to live.

Arthur Pearson was always interested in America. In 1896 he had an idea of investing money in American gold mines, and in 1898 he started the American Pearson Publishing Company with the idea of issuing his periodicals in the United States. A certain delay was caused by the Spanish-American war, but in 1899 *Pearson's Magazine*, largely a replica of the English edition, was published in New York. From the beginning it had a large circulation, but it proved to be an unprofitable proposition, and at the end of 1901 it was sold to J. J. Little, a New York publisher. It may be noted here that the attempt on the part of English publishers to issue their periodicals in the United States has always been a failure. The American *Pearson's Magazine* is still in existence, but its character has completely changed, and it has become a sort of propagandist publication, recently edited by Frank Harris. The plates of the *Royal Magazine* were for a time sent to America, and with them Arthur Pearson in collaboration with John Wanamaker issued in 1899 the first number of *Everybody's Magazine*, now one of the most prosperous periodicals in the United States.

Arthur Pearson himself visited America again in 1900, and during this visit he edited a Sunday number of the *New York World*. At this time he was fond of talking about possessing a chain of newspapers round the world, but he

never really had any idea of actually carrying out so extravagant an ambition.

Before leaving this chapter of his life, it should be noted that the publications issued by the Henrietta Street house have always carried out the policy that Arthur Pearson had in mind when he started *Pearson's Weekly*. They have always been intended for popular rather than for high-brow reading. At the beginning they largely appealed to a public created by compulsory education, unused to reading, and demanding stories and information which could be appreciated and understood without any great initial culture or without any great necessity for thought. As time has gone on, and the new reading public has become more sophisticated, the publications issued by Pearson's and other successful firms have become more and more ambitious. The majority of the most distinguished writers of his time appeared in one or other of Arthur Pearson's periodicals, among them Sir Hall Caine, Rudyard Kipling, and H. G. Wells. Many distinguished writers began their literary lives on his editorial staffs, and others sold their first work to one or other of his editors. Among the most notable of these writers is Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson, the author of *If Winter Comes*, who was for some time on the staff of the *Royal Magazine*. Mr. Rudolph Besier, the well-known dramatist, was at one time the editor of the *Royal*; and among others

who owe their start to Arthur Pearson are Miss Ethel M. Dell, the Baroness Orczy, Mr. Cutcliffe Hyne, Mr. Ralph Hodgson, and the late Hesketh Prichard—a curiously interesting and eclectic collection of men and women.

CHAPTER IV

THE F.A.F.

“ I EXPECT to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there is any good thing which I can do or any kindness I can show my fellow-men, let me do it now, let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

Arthur Pearson had a particular affection for these words of Thomas Carlyle, if it was Carlyle who was really responsible for them. Indeed, they may be said to have been, to a very large extent, the keynote of his life. He had a genius for kindliness. He not only loved doing good, he loved to be good in his own individual and original way.

Until he lost his sight, his philanthropic energies were mainly expended in the running of the Fresh Air Fund known to the readers of his many papers all over the world as the F.A.F. I have already referred to the origin of this fund. It began in 1891 with the collection of money for a poor children's Christmas feast. The readers of *Pearson's Weekly* were invited to contribute, and in the summer of 1892 another fund was started, through the

columns of the same paper, to supply a day's outing in Epping Forest to as many East-End children as could be taken out into the fresh air with the sum of money collected.

Arthur Pearson loved collecting money. It was one of his favourite amusements. He was never ashamed to beg, provided that the cause for which he begged was worthy. It amused him immensely to invent new ideas for attracting money from the pockets of the public, and no man ever showed such ingenuity in framing attractive appeals and in devising methods of interesting every section of the community. His career as a beggar began with the F.A.F. and in after years found picturesque fulfilment in his early appeals for the National Institute for the Blind, and his tremendously successful direction of the Prince of Wales's Fund, and in the gathering of subscriptions for the support of St. Dunstan's. There never was so successful a beggar as Arthur Pearson, and no one man ever succeeded in collecting so much money for such good causes.

From its beginning the outstanding feature of the F.A.F. has been that not one penny of the money collected has ever been spent in running expenses. The fund was Arthur Pearson's child, and the very large cost of direction has always been paid by his companies. The whole of the moneys subscribed has been devoted to securing one day's happiness for

unlucky little boys and girls, and never, surely, was so much happiness bought so cheaply.

When the first money was collected Arthur Pearson was anxious that it should be spent to the greatest advantage, and he got into touch with Mr. John Kirk, afterwards Sir John Kirk, of the Ragged School Union. Until his death Sir John Kirk remained with Mr. Ernest Kessell the directing head of the fund. He was an experienced philanthropist, and he worked it out that a child could be taken from the East End to Snaresbrook and be given a day in Epping Forest, with a meat pie for dinner and tea and bread and butter and cake for tea, for ninepence, and ninepence remained the F.A.F. magic figure until the war.

In the first year of the fund twenty thousand children had a day's outing, and in the second year forty thousand. In the third year Ernest Kessell and John Kirk started similar organisations in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Belfast, and Dublin. Other towns were afterwards added to the list, until in all the Fresh Air Fund operated in forty-two different centres. After taking the London children to Snaresbrook for two years it was found more advantageous to let them play farther in the heart of Epping Forest, and permanent buildings, which have been since enlarged, were erected at Loughton.

In 1908, King George and Queen Mary, then

Prince and Princess of Wales, went down to Loughton to see the F.A.F. children enjoy the one red-letter day in their sadly drab year, and they both expressed their astonishment that so much pleasure could be given for so little money. The King was so impressed that at the time of his coronation he himself gave a treat to a hundred thousand children at the Crystal Palace, and invited the secretary of the F.A.F. to act on his committee. In 1908 the Fresh Air Fund added to the day outings a fortnight's holiday for a smaller number of children.

The beginning of the war naturally meant a certain curtailment in the F.A.F.'s activities. Subscriptions were lower and the cost of happiness greater. Much of the leeway has been made up since the Armistice, though the ninepence has now swollen into one and threepence, and a fortnight's holiday costs a pound where before it only cost ten shillings.

Arthur Pearson always used his many publications as a means for raising F.A.F. subscriptions, and he could count on the cordial assistance of other periodicals.

In July 1900 *Punch* printed the following poem :

NINEPENCE

It's a' orful lot o' money, don't yer see ?
An I ain't a-got no friend
Wot is likely fer to spend
Sich a thumpin' sim o' money upon me.
The country !——



Photo. Elliott & Fry

1898.

They tells me, them as went there wiv the treat,
 That theer's grass as green as cheese,
 Wot yer walks on, if yer please,
 An' the birds is 'oppin' rahnd
 In the trees an' on the grahnd—
 Not in ciges wot they 'as in our back street.
 Then theer's flahrs, they tell me, wot's
 Growin' wild, an' not in pots,
 Dysies, buttercups they finds,
 And theer ain't nobody minds
 Though they sets to work and picks 'em—
 Yus, they actually nicks 'em,
 And theer ain't no bloomin' copper never comes along an' licks
 'em.
 In course I knows they're kiddin' me. I ain't not quite so
 green
 As ter swaller all them yarns o' theirs
 As if they're gospel true,
 But I'd like ter see a bit o' wot them other chaps 'as seen,
 An, s'elp me, if I'd ninepence, don't I know wot I would do ?

In looking through the F.A.F. press-cutting book I have been impressed by the ingenuity and originality of the appeals. For example, an article in the *St. James's Gazette* began in this way :

“ If you were to go down into the byways of London, where the streets are criss-cross tangle eastward by the docks and southwards by the factories, you would see a curious look of anticipation in the eyes of the little ones. There is something about this look that catches the imagination. In the winter they are chafing for the spring, and when spring comes they begin like all the other people of the world, big or little, to strut about more freely and blink their eyes at the sun. Then the look comes into their eyes. It is the ninepenny look. It is a look half wistful,

half eager ; blended with it there is a supreme confidence in human nature. It is the look which seems to say, ‘ Hallo, here’s the sun, we shall be seeing the country soon. I wonder if it will be the same as last year.’ I wonder.”

One year Arthur Pearson made the happy suggestion that his readers should give birthday parties on their own birthdays to two hundred children. On another occasion women were urged to keep their hair combings and sell them for the F.A.F., the amazing assertion being made that if all the hair combings in the country could be collected they could be sold for one hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year. When pretty Miss Pauline Chase became famous as Peter Pan she issued an appeal for the F.A.F. which began :

“ Doubtless you have heard all about me. I am Peter Pan, the boy who would not grow up. It was not because I was deprived of fresh air and good food that I did not grow up. It is because I found boyhood such a delightful thing that I could not bear to part with it. But I want to tell you of another race of children who do not grow up—not because their lives are so beautiful and hardly to be parted with like mine, but because of the want of sunlight, fresh air, and general change of environment their growth is stunted and their lives are joyless and unhappy. Wendy and I have made a great discovery. We have found out these poor children may be taken out into the country for a day’s outing very cheaply—so cheaply, in fact,

that a boy like me can buy it easily out of his week's pocket money. It only costs ninepence to send each one of these children away to the trees, sunshine, rivers, and birds."

When the war began and people were talking about "business as usual," the F.A.F. urged that so far as the slum children were concerned it should be "happiness as usual," and that true patriotism meant keeping the fund going whatever other calls there were on one's purse. At one time or another special appeals were made to newspaper compositors, to lawn-tennis players, to teachers of dancing and to hotel managers. Omnibus conductors and taxi-men were urged to contribute to the fund the money they received for restored lost property. Motorists have been invited to contribute a gallon of petrol, and golfers to send a couple of golf balls. Appeals have been made to the club-man to spare one ninepenny cigar, and these appeals found forcible expression in the following verse :

There's threepence change from every bob,

But oh the change from slums to trees,
Ninepence that fills each little nob

With never-failing memories.

They're dirty little devils, still

Give 'em their day at Buckhurst Hill.

Give 'em their day in Epping's glades

Filling the world with raucous noise,
These snub-nosed, toothless little maids,

These often foul-mouthed little boys.

Forego your ninepenny cigars

And hoist the kiddies to the stars.

The F.A.F. was not responsible for this poem. It appeared in a sporting weekly, but it is a good example of the universal sympathy that Arthur Pearson's appeals contrived to arouse. From the *Spectator* to the *Sporting Times* there was hardly a periodical or newspaper published in the whole British Empire that did not print his appeals and urge its readers to draw what Ernest Kessell has happily called "cheques on the bank of happiness."

Arthur Pearson's personal interest in the fund never flagged whatever other interests he might have. In the early days when he was establishing the business in Henrietta Street, ten years afterwards when he founded the *Express*, in the stress of the Tariff Reform League agitation, afterwards in the dark days when the certainty of blindness hung over his head, and later still amid the ceaseless anxieties of St. Dunstan's and the war, the F.A.F. remained very near Arthur Pearson's heart, almost as near as St. Dunstan's and the N.I.B.

This continued interest is shown in a letter written to P. W. Everett in May 1914, in the first flush of his enthusiastic work for the blind. He said :

"I think your idea of getting appeals from the F.A.F. Provincial Secretaries an exceedingly good one. It will bring some much needed freshness into the appeals.

"I, too, was very much impressed with the

results of the meeting, and am very angry with myself for not having done it before. However, better late than never, though not a good sentiment, it has to meet the case.

“Thank you for the nice things you say. I have quite deep and sincere feelings about the F.A.F., and believe if we who have worked it never did anything else we should have done our whack.”

In the last year of his life he was delighted by the Prince of Wales's consent to spend his twenty-seventh birthday with the F.A.F. children in Epping Forest. The Prince and Princess Mary thoroughly enjoyed themselves with the coconut shies and other Epping Forest delights, and after he had returned to St. James's Palace, the Prince sent this heartening message to Arthur Pearson :

“I shall be glad if you will cause it to be known that should any one wish to make me a birthday present, they cannot give me one which I should appreciate more highly than a contribution to the Fresh Air Fund.”

The 20,000 children who had one day's pleasure in 1891 grew before the war to half a million. The number has fallen off slightly, but in 1921, 165,743 children went out for a day, and 6127 were taken away for a whole fortnight. It fell to Arthur Pearson's lot to perform priceless service for his country's soldiers

and sailors, and in a way this service was an act of gratitude, for the Army and Navy have been from early days among the staunchest supporters of the F.A.F. Its 1921 report acknowledges subscriptions from fifty-nine of His Majesty's ships as well as from several naval depots. One ship's company contributed over £100.

The F.A.F. will remain a splendid monument to the man who, like the Bishop of Truro, believed in bringing Heaven into the world for the children. Its work will go on though its founder is dead. It may be that one of these days there will be no children living stunted lives in arid slums, but until that happy time comes, hundreds of thousands of the small neglected will have splendid reason to be grateful to a man of whose name they may have heard.

Arthur Pearson's care for children, of which the F.A.F. is the outstanding proof, also led him to take a keen interest in the Boy Scout Movement. After his death Sir Robert Baden Powell wrote :

"To him the Boy Scout Movement owes more than is perhaps known by the Scouts of the present day. He was, I think, the first public man to whom I spoke of the idea of the Boy Scout Movement, and his belief that there was something in it encouraged me to go ahead with it. It was thanks to Pearson that we started a small office in Henrietta Street with a staff of two. That was thirteen years ago, and

from that day the Scout Movement has grown and spread to its present strength of over a million members all over the world. Sir Arthur Pearson was himself a splendid example to Boy Scouts of energy, enthusiasm, and determination to overcome difficulties.

“Thousands of blind men will bless him as they mourn his loss to-day. So, too, will the Boy Scouts mourn the loss of a great man, who has left them so fine an example of pluck and kind-heartedness, and who did so much for our movement in its early days.”

How can a man's life be judged better than by the mourners who weep by his grave, and how many of us dare expect more than two or three mourners and just a few sincere tears? When Arthur Pearson died he was mourned by a legion of men and children for whom he had planned pleasure and help, and for whom he had tirelessly worked and begged. His great journalistic successes were half forgotten, and the world remembered the crowds of happy children playing, well-fed for a few hours, in the clean fresh air, the sturdy Boy Scouts educated in manliness, the blind who had been taught to conquer blindness.

CHAPTER V

THE *EXPRESS* AND TARIFF REFORM

ARTHUR PEARSON was not content for long to enjoy leisure in the country. On May 4th, 1896, Lord Northcliffe, then Mr. Alfred Harmsworth, started the *Daily Mail*. Two years before he had purchased the *Evening News*, and the swift change of an almost derelict property into a great success gave him the idea of running a daily newspaper on new and modern lines. Four years after the first number of the *Daily Mail* was issued its circulation was nearly a million. Whatever may have been its qualities and its defects, it was certainly what the public wanted. Arthur Pearson and Alfred Harmsworth were about the same age. Since 1890 they had been trade rivals. The possession of two important daily papers gave the Harmsworth group a great and definite advantage of their rivals, and Arthur Pearson determined also to enter what to him was the new field of daily journalism. In every respect the newspaper is as different to the periodical as the novel is to a scientific treatise. Its creation demands different qualities and

different experience, and the launching of a new daily newspaper is a colossal task that no man who was not a born adventurer would ever attempt. There was not the slightest economic necessity for Arthur Pearson to undertake new work that he knew must mean insistent strain, or to launch a new enterprise which demanded very large capital with a most uncertain chance of commercial success. But Arthur Pearson was only thirty-four. He could not use up his amazing energy in a quiet country life and occasional continental travel. Here was another world to conquer, a world in which his great rival had already established himself, and Pearson was not going to be left outside.

It should be added that Arthur Pearson had conceived the idea of a daily newspaper before the *Daily Mail* was born. His idea was to publish in London a daily paper particularly intended for American readers. It was to contain far more American news than was at that time printed in the English press, with striking extracts from the principal newspapers of the United States. He went so far as to take offices in London and to send Mr. A. W. Rider, for many years one of his chief business associates, to America to make arrangements, but it was found that the cost was prohibitive and that the enterprise would have no chance of financial success.

The first number of the *Daily Express* was

published on April 24th, 1900. It was an eight-page paper, and it had the distinctive feature which it still possesses, of printing the principal news on the outside page. The *Daily Express* appeared in the middle of the South African war, and the news feature of its first number was a two and a half column account of a British attack on the Boers near Bloemfontein. The first leader was signed C. A. P. Referring to his new venture, he said :

“ It will be the organ of no political party nor the instrument of any social clique. . . . Its editorial policy will be that of an honest Cabinet Minister. . . . Our policy is patriotic ; our policy is the British Empire.”

The paper was to be neither high-brow nor dull. “ We will tell you,” it announced, “ the comedy of life, putting its minor tragedies in the background.” There was a scoop in the first number of the *Daily Express* in the shape of a message from the German Emperor to the British people, obtained through an enterprising American journalist. In view of what was to happen fourteen years later, this message is not without ironic interest. The ex-Kaiser said : “ Tell the British people that my first hope now and always is the preservation of international peace ; my second, the consolidation and maintenance of good relations between Germany and Great Britain. Between these

two nations no essential cause of difference exists nor should ever arise ; between them there should be no rivalry other than friendly competition in furthering the economic and social progress of the peoples."

Arthur Pearson himself was the first editor of the *Daily Express*, working as hard and as many hours as he had worked before when he founded *Pearson's Weekly*. His first managing editor was the late Robert Dennis, who was followed by Fletcher Robinson, afterwards editor of *Vanity Fair*. Sir Percival Phillips, now the most famous of war correspondents, was an early member of the staff. He was then a young, slim, fair-haired American, who had been sent to Europe by a Pittsburg newspaper to describe the Græco-Turkish war while he was still in his teens. Mr. J. B. Wilson, now the news editor of the *Daily Express*, was actually on its first staff. Soon after it started Mr. Alexander Kenealy, who afterwards made the *Daily Mirror* an outstanding success, was one of the first news editors of the *Daily Express*, and in 1902 Ralph Blumenfeld, to whose originality and humour the paper owes so much, joined its staff as foreign editor. He became editor in 1906.

There was nothing pretentious about the *Daily Express*. Pearson was anxious to produce a paper that the ordinary man could read and understand. From the beginning no foreign words were allowed to be printed with-

out translations, and he constantly urged his staff "never to forget the cabman's wife." One can see Pearson's particular flair in most of the early features. In number eight, for example, there was a great heading on page two taking up a fifth of the whole page :

"GREAT ARCHÆOLOGICAL DISCOVERY AT
EPHESUS. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN
OUR LORD AND KING AGRIPPA."

In the ninth number there was an interview with the King of Sweden, and in the fortieth number a special interview with Kruger. The news of the relief of Mafeking was printed in number twenty-three with what to-day seems a strangely grandiloquent heading: "When shall their glory fade? History's Most Heroic Defence Ends in Triumph."

When the *Daily Express* had been in existence for six months it became notorious that the struggle to establish it as a paying proposition was extremely insistent and that very large sums of money had already been lost. On July 6th, in a leading article, readers were assured that everything was all right.

"We want to assure our well-wishers that the huge preliminary cost and the enormous daily losses at present sustained were all foreseen and provided for. The *Express*, we assure them, is no more likely to cease to exist than is the *Mail* or the *Telegraph*."

It was natural that during the first months of its existence Pearson should use the *Express* to aid the good work of his Fresh Air Fund, and considerable space was given in the paper in the summer of 1900 to picturesque accounts of the children's outings in Epping Forest.

In August 1900 the *Express* set out to brighten London, and some weeks before Rudyard Kipling wrote a special series of articles for it. It is rather curious that Arthur Pearson, a confirmed cyclist and motorist himself, enjoying risks of all kinds, should have deprecated the riding of bicycles by women. The leader-writer in the *Express*, September 7th, says :

“ It is difficult to understand men who cycle themselves, or, at any rate, who know of the dangers and difficulty and nervous strain of riding in the thick of the traffic, can complacently suffer their wives and young daughters to go out alone among the omnibuses, cabs, and vans at the busiest times of the day.”

The famous Khaki Election took place in October 1900, and the *Daily Express* set out its policy.

“ Recognising the fact, hitherto apparently unknown in newspaper circles, that there is something to be said on both sides of most questions.

“ Advocating strenuously Home Reforms when South Africa is settled.”

In December the *Daily Express* joined the big Navy agitation with a pronouncement in which it said :

“ Our Navy is unsound, and it is largely a paper figment dangled before the eyes of the people. . . . Our articles are alarmist: they are meant to be alarmist.”

The *Daily Express*, as Arthur Pearson conceived it, unquestionably fell into the class of what the superior person denounces as “ yellow journalism.” During my lifetime, on no subject has there been such hypocritical nonsense talked as on the particular form of journalism that has been associated with the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*. These newspapers were intended for people with little leisure, who wanted to acquaint themselves with the day’s news as rapidly as possible, who were too busy, and perhaps too unsophisticated, to read long heavy articles, and who lacked the culture to understand untranslated French phrases and erudite references to Aristotle. Nearly all the charges against the yellow newspapers may be traced back to jealousy of their success, and the papers that have been the most vehement in denunciation have also been most eager in imitation. The first charge against the modern popular newspaper is that its conductors regularly “ colour ” the news, over-emphasising certain incidents in the headlines and omitting

other incidents altogether. The charge is only partially true, and it must be remembered that to be entirely unprejudiced is to be entirely inhuman. If two men with absolutely different points of view were to describe events that affected their opinions, their stories would necessarily be contradictory. It therefore follows that this charge of colouring news merely means that the news is related in a human and an interesting manner. Moreover, it is a matter of journalistic history that no papers have been more guilty of suppressing and doctoring news that weighed against their particular policy than the papers that have unctuously thanked high Heaven that they are not as the Harmsworth and the Pearson press. It has been often said that the journalists who write for popular newspapers are paid to express the opinions of their proprietors and not the opinions which are their own. The political policy of every newspaper must necessarily be determined by its conductors, and articles on national and international affairs must obviously be written in accord with that policy. But so far as the criticisms of books and plays and music are concerned, the suggestion that men write to order is absolutely untrue. I wrote criticisms of plays and books in the *Daily Express* for over ten years, during the time that it was controlled by Arthur Pearson and for some years afterwards, and on no one occasion did

I ever receive any instruction either to praise or to blame. I think this is a point of some importance. The critic is engaged because in the opinion of the editor and proprietor he can write pleasantly and intelligently, and because they regard him as a person with judgment and experience. To suggest that such a man is willing to write as he is told, and not as he feels, is a libel against both the proprietors and a hard-working profession. As I look back on the years of my life, I am conscious of nothing but pride in the fact that I occupied for so long a position of responsibility on the staff of the *Daily Express*. I do not pride myself that I ever wrote anything in its columns of any particular importance, but I can affirm that I was always permitted to write what I believed and what I thought. So far as Arthur Pearson himself was concerned, whenever he trusted a man he was willing to a very large extent to give that man his head. The success both of the *Daily Mail* and of the *Daily Express* is mainly to be attributed to good editing, to the clever presentation of the goods in the shop window. It is easy for the superior person (who is generally a dull fellow) to sneer at such editing as mere trickery. To me it is craftsmanship.

Arthur Pearson rarely had any absorbing interest in politics. In its early days the *Daily Express* was never primarily a political organ, and although it did, as a matter of fact, generally

support the Unionist Government, its support was professedly patriotic rather than party. While, perhaps, on most political questions it would be fair to say that Arthur Pearson had an open mind, he had always been attracted by the suggestion that some modified form of protection was necessary if British industry was to hold its own against the competition of nations with high import tariffs.

At the beginning of the nineties of last century British politicians of all parties were nearly all free-traders. The protectionists were an inconsiderable body, led by the present Lord Chaplin and the late Sir Howard Vincent. The swift rise of Germany as an industrial power, and the ever-growing stress of her competition, led, however, to some doubt concerning the Cobdenite gospel, and had caused many people to reconsider the whole question. Interest in the subject was increased by the publication in 1895 and 1896 of two books by Mr. Ernest Williams called *Made in Germany*, and *The Foreigner in the Farmyard*. Arthur Pearson read both these books and found himself in general agreement with Mr. Williams's conclusions. In April 1900, just before the date of the first number of the *Daily Express*, he sent for Mr. Williams and arranged with him to write protectionist articles in the new paper. Mr. Williams wrote the leading article in the *Daily Express* on April 19th, 1901, after the

introduction of the Budget of that year in which Sir Michael Hicks-Beach added twopence to the Income Tax.

In the course of the article he said :

“Over and over again have Ministers promised the abolition of the Income Tax, which was only founded as a temporary emergency tax, and regularly have the payers been disappointed, until now the tax has become a permanent institution and reductions in the rate are altogether unlikely, because they would be the most unpopular method of disposing of a surplus, for the Income Tax is paid by a minority of the nation.”

This makes rather ironic reading in these days, when Income Tax is five shillings in the pound. The *Daily Express* had demanded that colonial sugar should be given preferential treatment, but Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, an enthusiastic Cobdenite, had not taken the hint. Referring to this matter, the leader went on to say :

“A grand opportunity has been missed, and our unfortunate West Indian colonies will be no better off than before, but will, indeed, be driven yet farther into the arms of the United States. It is pitiable. All our vaunted Imperialism, all the Government promises to help our royal colonies have ended in a uniform tax whose dullness is indeed deadly.”

Referring again in June to the subject of colonial sugar, the *Daily Express* said :

“ We fail to see the unanswerable force of the thin end of the wedge argument that you cannot stop at sugar, and that general discrimination against the foreigner and in favour of British Colonies would lead to tariff wars and loss of foreign trade ; for one thing, we look forward longingly to a great British Empire Zollverein some day which would be able to hold its own in any tariff war against the whole world, and which the world could not afford to boycott or defy, but in any case a countervailing duty or a preference to colonial sugar would not be responsible for the opening of strife. The strife has begun ; the bounties are the aggression ; our duty is to meet it.”

In July 1901 the *Daily Express* printed a series of articles called “ Shall We Protect Ourselves ? ” a preliminary glance at the question of “ Bread and Butter Politics.” The following are some of the more striking passages from these articles :

“ If the nation, and therefore the individuals who compose the nation, are going to maintain their industrial position, to earn a comfortable living, in short, they must bend themselves resolutely to questions of bread-and-butter politics ; because the lead has vanished and the citadel of our commercial prosperity is being ruthlessly attacked by invaders whose strength increases daily.”

“ We beg our readers, if they are not already emancipated, to divest themselves forthwith of the antiquated prejudices of fifty years ago. The aspect of the world has changed very much since then, and we should attune our minds and our policy to the new conditions. At the least, we beg you to examine, in a spirit of impartiality, and with a seriousness which the problem demands, the arguments for a self-preservative fiscal system which we shall lay before you. . . .”

“ Would an abandonment by us of free trade help us in our export trade with foreign countries? It would. Having abandoned the principle of free imports-at-all-costs, we should be in a position to bargain with those countries for more favourable tariffs. At present we have nothing to offer. We have thrown our reciprocity weapon away. . . .”

In the third article eight reasons for a protective policy were printed, and protection was urged :

“ 1. Because there is no such thing as free trade, and other nations refuse to admit our merchandise free into their markets.

“ 2. Because, under the ægis of protection, other nations have developed industries which would not have been developed, or not to such an extent, had they granted free trade admission to foreign manufactures.

“ 3. Because by so doing these other nations have become wealthy and self-supporting communities.

“ 4. Because England’s industrial supremacy has vanished and her prosperity is gravely threatened under her free import system, and under the attacks of protectionist nations, which attacks must be met by counter-attacks.

“ 5. Because economic self-containment, particularly in the matter of food supply, is a necessity to the well-being of any nation, and in this country can only be secured by a return to protection.

“ 6. Because the experience of other nations shows that manufacturing greatness and a big foreign trade are not incompatible with protection, even to agriculture.

“ 7. Because the national revenue can best be raised from import duties.

“ 8. Because a Customs Union will, as nothing else will, draw the Empire together and promote the mutual prosperity and loyal cohesion of its component parts.”

Each of the above points was discussed at length. In the final article of the series the *Daily Express* summarised the protectionist faith.

“ With protected markets here and in the Colonies, we could afford to disregard the German menace, and even the attacks of the mammoth American trust. Under the stimulus of protection industry would expand and be strengthened, and we should be in a position to hand down to our children a well secured and glorious imperial heritage. Is it not worth while to protect ourselves ? ”

The reform of the tariff was the only political measure in which Arthur Pearson was ever seriously interested. He was to be closely associated with the agitation to which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain devoted the latter part of his political career, but it is interesting to notice here that Arthur Pearson was a protectionist before Mr. Chamberlain, and that the *Daily Express* anticipated the great political leader.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain made a tour in South Africa at the end of the Boer War, and soon after his return to England launched the scheme of Tariff Reform, which was an integral part of an Imperial policy intended to create a closer and more intimate union between the various parts of the Empire. Following his own instincts and urged by Ralph Blumenfeld and J. B. Wilson, Pearson enlisted in the Chamberlain forces, and the *Daily Express* became for the first time a serious political organ, devoting a great deal of its space to the support of the Chamberlain agitation. Arthur Pearson was first of all a business man, and there is no doubt that he realised the circulation value of Tariff Reform. But it would be entirely erroneous to suppose that this was his only interest in the agitation. As a matter of fact, he was an enthusiastic believer in Chamberlainism, and he threw into the agitation all the energy which never failed him in every new enterprise to

which he turned his hand. His importance in the Chamberlain ranks was due to some extent to the fact that Sir Alfred Harmsworth, as he then was, was inclined to wobble. At the beginning his paper warmly supported Mr. Chamberlain, but in 1904 the *Evening News* in a leading article entitled "The Stomach Tax" denounced the suggestion that import duties should be placed on foreign food of any sort. Afterwards, Sir Alfred Harmsworth returned to his allegiance, but he never had quite the intimate relations with Mr. Chamberlain that Arthur Pearson held from 1903 until the statesman's unfortunate stroke.

It was in July 1903 that Arthur Pearson met Mr. Chamberlain for the first time at the House of Commons. Arthur Pearson urged on Mr. Chamberlain the necessity for the creation of a new political organisation that should be independent of the existing Unionist Association, and as a result the Tariff Reform League was brought into existence at a meeting held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on July 21st, 1903. The Duke of Sutherland was elected president, and among the members of the first executive committee were Lord Burnham and three members of the present Cabinet, Sir Arthur Boscawen, Mr. L. S. Amery, and Lord Lee of Fareham—then Mr. Arthur Lee. The first meeting of this executive committee was held on July 29th and Arthur Pearson was elected

chairman, a position which he held until March 3rd, 1905.

It was not often that Arthur Pearson found work too much for him, but after nearly two years he found it impossible any longer to direct the work of the Tariff Reform League. It was his child, and he had personally inspired its activities, going every morning to the League's offices in Victoria Street before starting work at his newspaper offices in Shoe Lane. He resigned the chairmanship of the executive committee on March 3rd, 1905, writing the following letter to the Duke of Sutherland, the League's President :

“ With great regret I find myself compelled to place in your hands my resignation from the office of chairman of the Tariff Reform League. During the last few months my business responsibilities have increased to such an extent that I do not find it possible to devote to the work of the league the time and attention which, in my opinion, should be devoted to it by one occupying the responsible position of chairman. I am more sorry than I can tell you that pressure of business prevents me from continuing in a post which I have been very proud to fill. I retire from it confident that the best interests of tariff reform are safe in the care of those with whom I have been privileged to work, and I hope that I may be allowed to render all the assistance that the time at my disposal permits to the furtherance of a cause in which I most sincerely believe.”

Mr. Chamberlain was present at the meeting and moved the following resolution :

“ That the executive committee expresses its sincere regret that Mr. C. Arthur Pearson has felt compelled through the pressure of his business engagements to resign the position of chairman of the league, which he has filled with such distinction, and desires to record its high appreciation of the invaluable services rendered by Mr. Pearson to the Tariff Reform League, and conveys to him its warmest thanks for his guidance and help as its chairman, more especially at the period of the inception of the league.”

In his speech Mr. Chamberlain said :

“ I think in some respects I am the proper person to move this resolution. I have had a pretty large experience in the formation of political and other organisations, and I know what an enormous amount of labour has devolved on any one who accepts, as Mr. Pearson did, the onerous position of chairman of a new league. I have had more opportunities lately of seeing something of the inner work of the league than I have ever had before. I am surprised at the magnitude of what has been already done and at the success which has attended its efforts, and I am convinced that the present state of the organisation and the character of its work have been largely due to the great devotion of Mr. Pearson. During the early months of its existence, if not all, certainly a very large amount of his valuable time was given to the

enormous detail work which was naturally involved. It is a matter of the greatest regret to me that we are losing his services in the capacity of chairman, and I am glad to say that we have induced him to stay with us as a vice-president of the organisation."

Arthur Pearson brought a fresh mind to political organisation, and his energetic originality must have considerably disturbed old-time politicians. Indeed they seem to have caused Mr. Chamberlain himself some little uneasiness, and his famous description of Arthur Pearson as the "greatest hustler I have ever known" was a compliment with a double edge.

On August 20th, 1903, Arthur Pearson wrote to Mr. Chamberlain :

"If you have not already arranged for the stage management of your autumn tour, would you like the Tariff Reform League to undertake it? We shall by then have a very large body of capable assistants, and though, of course, there won't be the least need to attract audiences, I think nothing ought to be left undone in the way of railway station crowds and so on."

The suggestion of organised demonstration did not, however, appeal to Mr. Chamberlain. The statesman was optimistic. He believed that his influence in England was sufficient to cause a general acceptance of his new gospel. Arthur Pearson was less hopeful. He said in a

letter written on September 18th, 1903: "I think the fight will be a longish one."

This was written nine days after the *Evening News* had declared that the working-class "recognises that the Stomach Tax will mean the taking of a great deal from England in order to confer a debatable benefit upon the Colonies." Arthur Pearson naturally regarded newspaper influence as more effective than it seemed to Mr. Chamberlain. With the defection of the Harmsworth Press, the opponents of Chamberlainism had preponderating influence in the cheap newspaper field. If the agitation were to be a success, Arthur Pearson urged that large sums of money must be spent in newspaper advertising and in the engagement of capable political organisers. "I confess," he wrote, "to a good deal of dubiousness regarding the value of men who consider themselves adequately paid by a salary of two or three pounds a week. In my business I have never found cheap men and good men synonymous terms."

Arthur Pearson was profoundly convinced that Mr. Chamberlain himself was the one great asset of the agitation. "In my judgment the thing to do at present is to play as much as possible upon your personality. Unquestionably your strong, bold statement of your position and policy have won over to you, for the time at all events, millions of people who would otherwise have been antagonistic. People in this

country love a strong man more than any other kind." In a long letter written on October 13th, Arthur Pearson urged Mr. Chamberlain to make a motor tour through the country districts, paying special attention to the agricultural labourer, as well as to speak at several big meetings in London. He was hustling with a vengeance, and Joseph Chamberlain was then seventy. His political originality was shown in further suggestions made in the same letter :

" Will you speak a twenty minutes' or half-an-hour's speech on the gramophone so that we can make its repetition a feature of our meetings. I do not know whether you have heard the gramophone of late. It has been enormously improved during the last few months, and it is not now spoiled by the tinny effect which used to be so objectionable. A loud-speaking gramophone can be heard in quite a large hall, and your very clear enunciation would be all in favour of a good reproduction. You need not be troubled in the matter at least beyond simply speaking the words. I will arrange with the gramophone people to come to Highbury with their recording instrument, and I would further arrange that the speech was repeated to you after the record had been taken and before it was used publicly, and that if you did not like it, it should be destroyed. If you will fall in with this suggestion it will enable us to present a tremendous attraction to small audiences all over the country and will secure bumper attendances at all our meetings. Grover Cleveland made great use of

the gramophone in its then still imperfect state of development during his last successful campaign.

“ You will be interested to learn that the song of which I told you and of which I hope to send you a copy to-morrow had a tremendous reception at the Alhambra and Canterbury music halls last night. The singer was recalled three times. It will undoubtedly become very popular and will be a great help.”

Apparently Mr. Chamberlain did not like the gramophone suggestion, nor do I think he was much impressed by the success of the song. In this connection it is interesting to note that in his desire to distribute Mr. Chamberlain's speeches by the gramophone, Arthur Pearson was anticipating the new methods of wireless telephony.

The correspondence between Mr. Chamberlain and Arthur Pearson makes it clear that the statesman was immensely attracted by the other man's lovable qualities. He paid frequent tribute to his hustling methods, but these methods must often have been a little terrifying to a man of mature years and none too robust health, particularly since the hustler could never understand that other people might not possess his own unconquerable energy and exuberant health.

Arthur Pearson had a great deal to do with the selection of the members of the Tariff

Commission which, under the secretaryship of Professor Hewins, was appointed to prepare a detailed scheme for an all-round import tariff. In the choice of the right people to serve on the commission, Pearson was continually annoyed by the difficulty of finding out whether this man or that was really a Protectionist or a Free Trader. He himself always knew what he believed and what he did not believe, and he never had any patience with the Laodicean. In this connection the following characteristic little outburst occurs in one of his letters to Mr. Chamberlain : " Really the difficulty of getting accurate information about how people think is appalling."

Arthur Pearson had no experience of political publications, and he had all his life worked in a world of immense circulations. He was therefore considerably disappointed when Mr. Chamberlain's speeches were published in pamphlet form in 1904. He wrote in another letter : " I am glad to hear you were not disappointed with the sale of your speeches. Personally I am. I quite thought it would run into six figures, and I had a good reason for this in the fact that your speeches have always led to a considerable extra demand for the morning papers. The ordinary rule is that the more popular a thing is when it is published in a paper, the larger will its sale be when it appears in book form. This is true of articles,

stories, and indeed everything with the apparent exception of speeches.”

In November 1904 Mr. Chamberlain once more protested against being run too hard; but his high opinion of Arthur Pearson and of his work for Tariff Reform is shown in a very cordial letter written to him on February 17th, 1905, in which he suggested that Arthur Pearson should stand for Parliament. As a matter of fact, Arthur Pearson never had any ambition to add M.P. after his name. He was temperamentally unfitted for never-ending debates and the slow moving machinery of Parliament. He was too impatient of disagreement, and the only arguments that ever appealed to him were entirely one-sided, the one-side being his. Until his connection with Tariff Reform he had had little experience of public speaking, but he soon developed a faculty for clear, straightforward speech-making. Perhaps the best Tariff Reform speech he ever made was when he took the chair for Mr. Chamberlain at a famous meeting at Limehouse. After he lost his sight he made many public speeches, admirable in form and delivery. He took a great deal of pains with them and generally learned them off by heart.

One very striking evidence of Arthur Pearson's enthusiasm for Tariff Reform is shown by the fact that in 1903, for the first and only time in its existence, he published a series of

political articles in *Pearson's Weekly*. These articles were headed "Questions that Perplex Us," and they began on September 17th with the following introduction :

"The editor of *Pearson's Weekly* has decided that he will from time to time, as great questions arise, devote space to explaining some knotty problem, whether political or social, that may happen to be the talk of the moment. He will ask some great authority on any particular subject to express his views, to explain as fully and as clearly as possible what he means and what he wishes, and will invite from readers of *Pearson's Weekly* expressions of opinion for or against the principal writer—of any honest endeavour to explain in simple language what a great movement really means, *Pearson's Weekly* is the right kind of paper to do this. It has no politics. It has, indeed, no opinions or convictions. It is just a simple home paper for ordinary men and women, 'to interest, to elevate, to amuse'—the motto of its first number and the motto of its present. If, however, some phrase occurs in any article that does not meet with your entire approval, remember that we will print your letter or some letter of your way of thinking. These articles are to get at the bottom of things for the benefit of all. So we will start with 'What does Free Trade Mean.' The term Free Trade is a popular name for the suggested new Protection Tariff, and on this subject we have received the communciation printed below from Mr. Joseph Chamberlain."

A letter from Mr. Chamberlain, written from the Colonial Office, appeared with the first article. In it he heartily welcomed "the discussion on our fiscal system which the editor of *Pearson's Weekly* is about to open in its columns," and guardedly added that "owing to the pressure of my work it is impossible for me to make myself personally responsible for all the statements made and arguments employed by supporters of Tariff Reform." The articles only lasted for five weeks. Politics were, as a matter of fact, quite out of place in *Pearson's Weekly*, and no one really knew this better than Arthur Pearson himself. I mention the fact that for five weeks *Pearson's Weekly* was political as an example of its founder's enthusiasm for the Chamberlain scheme, an enthusiasm which, for a while, led him to abandon an established and successful policy.

The *Daily Express* parrot with its cry, "Your food will cost you more," played an amusing part in the Tariff Reform agitation. The Protectionist parrot first appeared in the *New York Press*, when it was owned by a cotton manufacturer named Phillips of Massachusetts, whose business interests made him an enthusiastic supporter of import duties. The parrot was invented by the editor of the *Press*, an Englishman called Robert P. Porter, who had been a director of the United States Census. Robert Porter afterwards joined the staff of the

London *Times* and inaugurated its famous series of supplements.

After 1904 Arthur Pearson, owing to his many new interests, left the immediate direction of the *Daily Express* to other hands, though for several more years he attended conferences and supervised policy. He always believed in allowing his responsible subordinates largely to act according to their own judgments, and in this way he contrived to secure the best possible service. In his day the *Daily Express* office was a happy place in which to work. The paper did not make much money, and none of us was overpaid, but C. A. P.'s spirit—the spirit of kindly comradeship—pervaded the whole building. “Pearson,” said one of his editor's to me, “was never one of those proprietors who must sack a reporter before he can get sufficient appetite to eat his dinner.” He never bullied. He never criticised unfairly. He was always generous in his praise.

CHAPTER VI

THE STANDARD

ON November 4th, 1904, political England was astonished by the announcement that Arthur Pearson had bought the *Standard* and the *Evening Standard* from the Johnstone family. In the previous year Arthur Pearson had acquired a controlling interest in the *St. James's Gazette* from Mr. W. Dallas Ross, who had acquired the paper from its founder, Mr. Edward Steinkopff. Mr. Ronald McNeil, now the well-known "Die-hard" M.P. for Canterbury, was editor of the paper when it first passed into Arthur Pearson's hands. He was succeeded in 1904 by Mr. Gerard Fiennes, nowadays an authoritative naval critic. In 1905 Arthur Pearson amalgamated the *St. James's Gazette* with the *Evening Standard*.

The *Standard* was originally the evening edition of the *Morning Herald* and was first published in 1827. It owed its origin to the controversy on Roman Catholic emancipation, and at the beginning was the organ of the extreme Protestant party. From 1827 to 1904 it was always High Tory, and the most famous

of its editors was Dr. Giffard, the father of the first Lord Halsbury. In its later days, under the editorship of Mr. Byron Curtis, the *Standard* was a vehement opponent of Mr. Chamberlain's schemes for Tariff Reform. It represented that section of the Unionist Party that followed the Duke of Devonshire in his opposition to even modified protection.

On October 12th, 1904, Arthur Pearson said in a letter to Mr. Chamberlain :

“ The *Standard* is in the market and I have secured an option on it. The paper has, of course, gone down very much of late, but not too far to be saved from the total wreck which will befall it if it is left much longer under its present management. From the business standpoint it is conducted on old and extravagant lines by people with no knowledge of practical newspaper work. With the introduction of modern methods it is, I am certain, capable of being brought back to a state of prosperity and of regaining the influence which it has lost.

“ The *Standard* among newspapers is like a free-fooder in the Cabinet. It is a powerful enemy in our ranks and very much more harmful than an open foe. In my judgment the *Standard* has from the point of view of newspaper influence done far more to impede the course of Tariff Reform than any other paper. It has still a great hold among the sober thinking classes and particularly among business men, for its commercial intelligence has always been looked upon as the very best.”



Photo. Hale's Studio, Farnham

OUTSIDE THE STABLES AT FRENTHAM PLACE, 1906.

This is the letter of the business man and the politician, and the business man is much more evident than the politician.

After the public announcement that the paper had been bought, Mr. Chamberlain wrote to Arthur Pearson from Sienna to congratulate him, and wish him success. In his letter he refers to the rumour that Arthur Pearson had paid £700,000 for the *Standard*. If this had been so it would certainly have been "the greatest newspaper deal that has ever been negotiated," but, as a matter of fact, the actual sum paid was £300,000.

As Mr. Chamberlain said, the dovescots were indeed fluttered. The Free Trade papers denounced the sale as a treacherous offence against the sacred gospel of Cobdenism, and Arthur Pearson was vehemently denounced as a newspaper "boss" eager to stifle the expression of any opinions with which he did not agree. The fact was that the *Standard* had been for some time in the market. It was a property of decreasing value which its original owners were eager to sell, and although he was naturally glad to add an authoritative newspaper to the ranks of Tariff Reform, the purchase of the *Standard* was for Arthur Pearson largely a commercial undertaking. He was convinced that with modern methods it could once more be made into a flourishing property. The Free Trade anger can be well understood, however,

when it is remembered that after the conversion of the *Standard* there were fifteen daily and evening papers in London that supported Chamberlainism and only six that opposed it. It was constantly suggested in the Free Trade Press that in the purchase of the *Standard*, Arthur Pearson was merely the figurehead of a syndicate; and the *Morning Leader* gravely suggested that he was really acting for William Randolph Hearst, the notorious anti-English American newspaper magnate. The extraordinary, and it as seems nowadays, farcical vehemence with which Arthur Pearson was attacked can be gathered from the following extract from a speech delivered by Mr. Winston Churchill at Glasgow a few days after the purchase :

“ Only last week had witnessed the capture of the *Standard* newspaper, that great organisation of the middle classes which for so long possessed a character of its own. When the great Free Trade controversy arose, the *Standard*, like the *Glasgow Herald*, by remaining perfectly true to the Unionist cause, also remained perfectly true to Free Trade. Few articles upon the controversy have been more able, none more damaging to the Protectionists than those written in the *Standard*. They could not answer them. An easier method presented itself. £700,000 was found—I wonder where—the *Standard* passed into the hands of the champion hustler of the Tariff Reform League. The group of

able writers who exerted so much influence is scattered ; their places are filled by the obedient scribes of a mammoth trust and the protest of the last remaining Tory Free Trade newspaper is silenced for ever. The Commination Service declares him accursed who removes his neighbour's landmark. What shall be said about those who in these later days poison the foundations of public information ? ”

This windy rubbish contained a serious misstatement. The majority of the able writers whom Mr. Winston Churchill eulogised remained on the staff of the paper after its sale. Mr. S. H. Jeyes, who had for five years acted as assistant editor, retained his post, and Mr. Sidney Low, now Sir Sidney Low, and Mr. Richardson Evans, continued to be the principal leader writers. Mr. Low also accepted the position of literary editor. The only prominent member of the old staff who did not remain with Arthur Pearson was the editor, Mr. Byron Curtis. There was some rather heated argument as to whether Mr. Byron Curtis had refused to edit a Tariff Reform paper or whether Arthur Pearson had decided that he must have a new editor, and, incidentally, a great deal of nonsense was written in various hostile organs. Apart from all political considerations, every practical journalist knew at the time that Mr. Byron Curtis did not possess the qualities to make a successful editor of a modern newspaper, and the history of the *Standard* under his

guidance was quite sufficient proof of that. Arthur Pearson replied to his critics in a candid letter which appeared in the *Spectator* of November 9th, 1904. In the course of this letter he said :

“ My newspaper organisation, to which the *Standard* is the latest addition, is no more a trust than is Lloyds Bank, the Gordon Hotels, Messrs. Thomas Cook & Sons, or any other great business which has branches in different parts of the country. The fact that I have succeeded in extending my business rapidly seems, for some occult reason, to give serious offence to certain of my critics. If some of their assertions were true, I grant that there would be cause for adverse criticism. They say, for example, that my newspapers profess different principles in different parts of the country. This is not so. Every daily newspaper for which I am responsible—and I am connected with none for which I am not responsible in great issues—advocates the same views on subjects of national importance.

“ Finally, I should like to touch upon some purely personal matters. I trust that I may be excused an appearance of egotism. It is difficult to speak about oneself without this. I am not—as some people think I ought to be—in the least ashamed of having been the manager of a great business, of which *Tit-Bits* was the principal production, when I was nineteen years old, nor of having made an independent start by the production of *Pearson's Weekly* a few years later. Neither can I see that there is anything terrible

in the fact that I am only thirty-eight to-day. I know that to some minds it is almost a crime to attain success when one is young ; but I believe that both in this respect and in that of having begun with comparatively small things I do not differ from many others who have arrived at some prominence both in our own and in former days."

Arthur Pearson appointed Mr. H. A. Gwynne, now the editor of the *Morning Post*, the editor of the *Standard*. Mr. Gwynne had a long experience as a newspaper correspondent. He had represented Reuter's Agency at Bucharest, in the Soudan, and during the Græco-Turkish and South African wars. He accompanied Mr. Chamberlain in his South African tour, and in a letter to Arthur Pearson, Mr. Chamberlain warmly approved of his new appointment. Mr. Gwynne had little or no experience of the inside of newspaper offices, but he had the great asset of intimate knowledge of international politics and a close acquaintance with personages both at home and abroad. His appointment was sufficient proof that Arthur Pearson was jealous of the great reputation of his new possession and of his determination to increase its authority. The news editor of the *Standard* was Mr. William Good, now Sir William Good, K.B.E., who, since the war, has performed splendid international service in the struggle to reconstitute the industrial stability of central Europe.

Arthur Pearson appointed his cousin, William Woodward, editor of the *Evening Standard*, and under his guidance it became the excellently edited and written evening paper that it still remains. It may safely be said that Arthur Pearson was never happier in the selection of an editor than when he appointed Woodward to the *Evening Standard*. He and his cousin were always close friends, and the success of the *Evening Standard* under Woodward's editorship was a matter of intense gratification to Pearson. Woodward was lucky in his staff, which included Guy Pollock, now the assistant editor of the *Express*, and Lints Smith, now the manager of the *Times*, at that time generally recognised as the most talented reporter on the London press. Many minor changes were necessarily made in the staffs of both papers and antedeluvian methods were modernised. It has always remained a marvel to me, bred as I have been in the methods of modern journalism, how the old-time newspaper was ever brought out. A newspaper has to be recreated every day, a task that cannot, it would seem, possibly be performed unless the editor is always accessible to his staff. It is said, I do not vouch for the truth of the statement, that if a member of the staff of the old *Standard* wished to see the editor, he had to write for an appointment, which was probably given him three days hence.

Arthur Pearson used to say that when

he first went over the *Standard* office he inquired in vain for the editor of the *Evening Standard*. No one had apparently ever heard of such a person. Pursuing his search, Arthur Pearson finally found himself in the composing room, where the head printer was sitting with a pile of manuscript in front of him. By his side were two baskets, one was labelled "copy" and the other "muck." The printer used his own discretion. The "copy" was set. The "muck" was not.

Soon after he bought the *Standard*, Arthur Pearson transferred the offices of the *Daily Express* from Tudor Street to a building opposite the *Standard* offices in Shoe Lane. He threw a bridge across the lane and had a private office in each building. At this time of his life Arthur Pearson was again working many hours a day. His voluminous correspondence with Mr. Chamberlain shows how complete was his personal direction of the Tariff Reform agitation. He was still keenly interested in the fortunes of the *Daily Express*, and he spent a large part of his time and energy in the endeavour to rehabilitate the fortunes of the *Standard*. He has himself described how he contrived to accomplish the many tasks that he had set himself:

"I lead a very methodical life, getting up at seven o'clock and going to bed at midnight, although, on an average, I was up till about

four for a number of days after I took over the *Standard*. The first thing I do is to read some of my papers. Fortunately I can get over a column of type in half the time that will be taken by any one else I have ever come across. I get through with the lot by seven forty-five, then I exercise to eight-thirty, swinging my arms and legs about—all that sort of thing—good hard work, getting a good sweat. A man comes to me every morning and puts me through my paces. I need a lot of exercise, and take it in this way in tabloid form. At eight-thirty I read more newspapers for a quarter of an hour. Then I have my bath. After a very light breakfast my secretaries come along with my letters, collected from all the different places, and I usually manage to go through these by ten o'clock, that means that I have broken the back of the day's routine and am free to sort out the rest of the time according to circumstances. My one great rule is that the busier I am the longer I take for lunch. It is a light lunch, but I take my time over a cigar after it. I am perfectly sure that going directly back to work after lunch is the thing to kill you.

“Perhaps the hardest fight in my life now is to get rid of detail. I keep seeing things all the time that I fancy I can do better than the man who happens to be doing them; but once you succumb to a temptation of that sort there are a thousand temptations of the same kind all equally strong, and your effectiveness is lost.

“With every new venture, however, I go into details with a microscopic eye; nothing is too small to master and rearrange until it is producing its utmost effectiveness. Then leave

it alone as much as you can. One of the great rules of business is to forget things and to get some one else to remember them for you. Here is my pocket notebook, for instance. The minute I think of anything to be done, down it goes in the book and my mind is free of it. The first thing my personal secretary does when he comes to me is to say 'Notebook,' then we work off all the entries accumulated. My secretary is my memory to the greatest possible extent.

"I save myself in every possible way. I figure that I save several hours out of each year by signing only my initials to all of the great number of business letters I dictate—excepting only those, of course, that are of importance."

This fragment of autobiography might well be headed "How to become the Compleat Hustler." The boast that he could read newspapers more quickly than any other man is pathetic to read in view of the direful consequences to his eyes that this over-employment was to entail. At the time when Arthur Pearson was describing his day's work, in addition to the publications issued by Pearson's Limited, he controlled the *Standard*, the *Evening Standard*, the *St. James's Gazette*, the *Daily Express*, the *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, the *Birmingham Evening Dispatch*, the *Leicester Evening News*, the *North Mail*, the *Midland Express* and the *Newcastle Weekly Leader*.

There was one rather amusing and very characteristic note of rejoicing when Pearson

bought the *Standard*. It appeared in *The Car*, which said in its issue of November 9th, 1904:

“ There has been no more persistently unkind critic of automobilism among the daily press than the *Standard* which has just changed hands. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and I am sure that Mr. C. Arthur Pearson, who has been an enthusiastic automobilist for a long time past, will be no party to a tax, or scares which are unreasonable. Sometimes the leading articles have been almost ludicrous in their violence, and the correspondence column has teemed with letters the burden of which has been, ‘ Why should motorists be allowed to live ? ’ The other great London dailies have long ago taken a lively interest in the new movement towards mechanical locomotion and have, no doubt, achieved good results, both in increasing the number of their readers and in their advertisement columns. Let us hope it will be the same with the *Standard*.”

Working hard in Shoe Lane and with two new papers added to his already formidable list of publications, it might have been supposed that Arthur Pearson’s hand was sufficiently full, but towards the end of 1907 he began to negotiate for the purchase of a controlling interest in the *Times*. On January 7th, 1908, it was announced in the *Times* and the *Daily Mail* that he had actually acquired this control, subject to the confirmation of the Courts. On

February 20th, 1908, it was further announced that Arthur Pearson had withdrawn his scheme. It is now a matter of common knowledge that the scheme was defeated by the opposition of Mr. Moberly Bell, then the manager of the *Times*.

The morning *Standard* was Arthur Pearson's first and only failure, and despite the almost fierce enthusiasm with which he worked, despite the fact that the paper was improved out of all knowledge, the circulation was never satisfactorily increased. The army of new newspaper readers were amply catered for by the half-penny papers, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily News* and the *Daily Chronicle*, and the *Standard* had fallen so far behind in its bad years that it could never be re-established as a serious rival to the *Times*, the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Telegraph*. The public interest in the Tariff Reform agitation was for all intents and purposes destroyed by the Radical victory at the General Election of 1905, and by the stroke which took Mr. Chamberlain permanently out of the ranks of fighting politicians. Arthur Pearson was a man of splendid courage, but he detested being beaten. His early career had been one long romance of success, and it bored him to be responsible for a publication which showed no signs of becoming a genuine financial proposition. He grew weary of the losing battle. He once said that every time there was a fog

or an east wind the *Standard* lost at least one of its elderly readers, and that there were never any young readers to replace the veterans. The success of the *Evening Standard*, great as it was, was not sufficient to carry on the morning edition. After six years' struggle Arthur Pearson sold both the *Standard* and the *Evening Standard* to Mr. Davison Dalziel on April 22nd, 1910.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROAD TO DARKNESS

ARTHUR PEARSON'S eyes had been steadily growing worse. On March 18th, 1908, Mr. Robert Doyne successfully operated on him for glaucoma, but after this operation he was never able to see well enough either to read or write. His doctors advised that he should take a complete rest from work, and he went down to Frensham Place and stayed there for six months. It was during this time that he turned part of the riding school into a great aviary. He motored all over the country seeking rare birds, but the aviary experiment was not altogether a success. He found it was impossible to keep hundreds of birds of different varieties together, and on most days at least half a dozen were killed through fights. What was food, too, for one variety of bird was poison for others, and many deaths were caused by birds eating unsuitable foods. At the end of six months he sold his complete collection.

During this respite from work he would often start out in the morning with a golf club and about thirty balls, driving them one after

the other and hiring boys to find them and bring them back to him. Walking was, however, his chief amusement. He had an intimate knowledge of the country round Frensham, and he would generally walk ten or twenty miles every day.

During the latter part of 1908 he was able to work again, and for some time he came regularly up every morning from Frensham to Shoe Lane. He was unable, however, to continue for very long, and in the spring of 1909 he arranged a walking tour through the Austrian Tyrol. By this time he had thoroughly made up his mind that sooner or later he was sure to be blind. After the Austrian Tyrol holiday he had another bout of work, during which he was intimately concerned with the meeting of the first Imperial Press Conference. Two years before, his private secretary, Mr., now Sir Harry Brittain, went to Canada, and while he was there he discussed the idea of a conference of Empire newspaper directors with many Canadian journalists. The idea developed, and thanks to the energy of Harry Brittain, Arthur Pearson, H. A. Gwynne, Robert Donald, and the late Kennedy Jones, the conference was held in London. It culminated with a great banquet in the Earl's Court Exhibition, which was attended by practically every working journalist in London, and at which Lord Rosebery made a noteworthy speech. Other conferences fol-

lowed, and the connection between the newspaper directors of the Empire has ever grown closer. Although to a large extent Sir Harry Brittain's boundless energy is responsible for the success, Arthur Pearson had no little deal to do with the happy launching of a great scheme.

In the spring of 1910 Arthur Pearson and his family went to Switzerland for four months. Some three or four years earlier he had made his first trip to Switzerland with Harry Brittain, who had taught him to ski, and Brittain tells an amusing story of how Pearson set out to organise a sleepy Swiss resort, sending to England for a band and running the place on business lines. In August 1910 he walked from Ragaz to St. Moritz, where he stayed for two months in order to do some serious climbing. From St. Moritz he walked to Lake Como, where he stayed for another month, and on November 9th he started to walk from Varenna eastwards through northern Italy to the Italian Riviera, across the French frontier, and along the French Riviera to Marseilles and Toulouse. This walk took rather more than four months. Arthur Pearson kept a detailed diary of this adventure of his, which in many respects is extremely interesting and suggestive. He was very nearly blind. He knew that he would be quite blind within an approximately short time, and the diary shows an eagerness to record "things seen" with an elaborate detail that to me is extremely

pathetic. I have made certain extracts from this diary which illustrate this ache, to put on paper, perhaps, the last things that the writer's eyes would ever see. Even then he was seeing as through a glass darkly.

BELLAGGIO

The scenery was very beautiful, first looking over Como, then Lecco branches of the lake. Passed a very picturesque old church with quaint old tower, pierced with many different shaped windows, grassy steps leading up to it bordered on each side with little chapels containing decayed frescoes which must once have been good. Adjoining the church a building, perhaps 20 feet by 12, containing a hundred or so pigeon-holes, in each of which was a skull, and numerous other cupboards containing some thigh bones, arm bones, backbones, and other bones of various kinds; open windows guarded with grills gave the opportunity of seeing this very repulsive collection.

ERBA

Passed nothing of interest except fine old tower gate leading out of Como. Scenery was beautiful. View of Monte Rosa chain, from road above Como; otherwise nothing very exciting.

CARIMATA

At Carimata, a little way from Cantu, was a very stately and magnificent castle built of red brick, with noble battlements; very broad

moat, crossed by drawbridge, and high square tower inside; a large courtyard surrounded by rooms with broad balconies, in a very good state of repair, except just at the entrance where renewals are needed. Altogether a very interesting and magnificent edifice, of which the Arnibaldi family, to whom it belongs, have every reason to be proud.

SAROMO

After lunch we went to see the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin, a large and very beautiful church, containing some excellently preserved frescoes of Luini. They are carefully kept behind curtains, and are remarkable for a preponderance of a very delicate shade of blue in the dresses.

RHO

We saw a very curious form of fishing. It was in a rapid stream about 12 feet wide and 2 feet deep. An old man and a boy were wandering down this; each of them had a plank about 6 feet long tied to his boot, and each held a kind of net made of coarse cloth stretched over a rough framework made of sticks. They took a step forward in unison dragging the planks along the bottom of the stream and holding the net in front of it; after each step they pulled the net up, and usually found from six to twelve little fish in it like minnows. These they dropped into a wide-mouthed earthenware pot tied round their waists, and took another step, repeating the process. They must have caught a lot of fish, but it must have been terribly cold work.

BOBBIO

An exceedingly beautiful high road along the Val Trebbia following the river of that name, a stream which indulges in most curious contortions. In one place it doubles back in the direction from which it came. It then takes another exceedingly sharp turn, almost making a high rock crowned with a little village into an island, turns just as sharply again and resumes its course. The road wound very much round the mountain's side and has long, gently graded ascents and descents. Excepting for its picturesqueness it has no features ; there is hardly a house on it.

OTTONE

Passed curious old humped-back bridge built by Napoleon in 1805. Also another old modern bridge built from one side of the river where the bank is high to the other side where the bank is low and without any curve, with the result that those using it have to climb up and down a ladder. The level ground is so difficult to find about here that barns are all built down hill, the bottom of them being 15 or 20 feet below road level, and the roof very neatly thatched and almost upright, this evidently to prevent snow lying.

CHIAVARI

Saw a wedding in an interesting old church above Chiavari ; the altar is below the level of the congregation in a sort of crypt, the result being nothing can be seen of the officiating priests. On each side of the hollow at the end

of the chancel in which it stands is a flight of steps curving upwards to another altar apparently only ornamental; altogether a curious effect, and on the whole a good one, giving an air of mystery to the service.

PORTOFINO

Retraced the beautiful coast road to St. Marghareta, stopping to look at ground floor of very large house begun and only carried so far; it occupied a beautiful position on a little promontory, and is most magnificently walled, the wall being made of huge stone blocks as big as those at the Strozzi Palace at Florence, with a recessed intervening layer about 4 inches wide. Poked about St. Marghareta a bit, then mounted the hill to San Lorenzo by an excellent mule path, stopping to shelter from a few drops of heavy rain in a trattoria at Reta. Here they had quaint old china vessels for wine, shaped like a teapot but big enough to hold four or five litres, and made of quite a pretty blue and white china with brass bindings round the rim and where the spout joined the pot.

SAVONA

At the town short of Savona we were much interested in the pottery-making, which seems to engage the whole population. The vessels made are those which one sees for sale in the market-places all over Northern Italy, of all sizes, from a shallow pan up to pots 18 inches deep. Some with straight handles, some with curved, some with none. There is also some

better-class pottery of the hideous, ornamental order made here.

The first part of the road was very muddy. Along it are many orange and lemon groves, including several of tangerines. These we notice are very carefully surrounded with high walls topped with glass, which evidently serve the double purpose of keeping out cold winds and thieves.

NOLI

On the way out of Noli we stopped to see the old church of San Paragonio; it is architecturally a most interesting building, and has been made a national monument. A very untidy old priest who is its guardian showed us over it. There are some interesting old tombs outside. The interior has curious stone built columns, each one different to the others, and behind a side altar is a huge cross which is really a succession of cupboards. Inside them was the figure of a gorgeously arrayed priest with arms stretched out and silver boots.

BORGHETTO

We looked into an olive-oil factory and were again disagreeably impressed with the entire disregard for cleanliness which seems to be the rule in the food factories in this part of the world.

ALBENGA

Shortly after leaving Borghetto we passed a very fine château beautifully situated and belonging to Count Somebody. Its foundation walls



Photo. Reginald Haines

1909.

are built in a fashion more substantial than one often sees nowadays. From this the road descended to a plain through which it meandered until we reached Albenga. It was excessively muddy, and at frequent intervals were very evil smelling heaps of house refuse to be used as manure. The gardens looked very fertile, and seemed to produce particularly good cardoons and asparagus.

CHURCH AT PORTA MANVIZIA

With the exception of some of the famous cathedrals—and by no means all of these—this gave me more pleasure than any church I have seen in Italy. Externally, it is an odd-looking building which would hardly be taken for a church—internally, it is very grand, massive, and simple, with none of the tawdry decorations almost always found in Italian churches. It is all white marble. In the centre is a very finely proportioned dome, simply and beautifully decorated. Along each aisle are three small domes, equi-distant and divided from one another by bold arches springing from massive pillars. It is a building very well worth visiting. The only decorations are large religious pictures, in massive marble frames. They may or may not be artistically good. They are, at all events, good enough to make a beautiful effect and to please the ordinary observer.

LA TURBIE

The famous view from La Turbie looked its best, and we started off along the Corniche

road revelling in the first really perfect day we had had for nearly three weeks. It was really lucky that this day should be fine, for the walk as we had it planned out cannot be surpassed for beauty and variety of scenery. We went along until we were above Eze, perched on its pointed mountain top, and enjoyed a succession of glorious views of the coast; back as far as Bordighera and on to the Estérel, surely as beautiful a coast-line as can be seen anywhere, and most beautiful when seen from the lofty Corniche road, whence the attempts of man to spoil the scenery by hideous buildings are almost unnoticed. We went down to quaint little Eze on its lofty perch and enjoyed the nearer view of sea and shore from there, then up again to the Corniche where we found a nice little Restante, and once more revelled in the luxury of lunching in the sunshine. From the terrace where we sat the sea was concealed, but there was a most glorious view of mountains ending with the snowy peaks of the high Alpes-Maritimes.

PIC ROUX

There may be a more beautiful point of view in the South of France than Pic Roux, but in a fairly long experience I have never come across it. The combination of blue sea, red rocks, pine clad hills and snow mountains are as near perfection as anything this poor world can offer.

OLD FORT OF ROUX

To picture it you must imagine a pear a quarter of a mile long; its sides everywhere

absolutely precipitous and two hundred feet high, sloping gently upwards towards the stalk. At the calyx end is a narrow zigzag path; where this reaches the top are remains of strong fortifications quite impregnable in days before artillery. Along the level top are great walls and moats increasing in strength, until at the very end one finds a strong fort. Here and there are deep circular cisterns hollowed out of the solid rock, some for storage of grain, others with channels running to them to conduct water. This place must in the old days have been absolutely impregnable. It is obvious it has been used as a stronghold for many centuries and was last so employed in the Religious Wars.

UZÈS

Before leaving for Uzès we saw a truly horrid sight. Just outside the hotel was a kid market. Peasants were flocking to it from every direction, bringing their baby goats, some few carried in baskets, but nearly all with their four feet tied together with a piece of string and carried by them like carpet bags. Few bleating piteously, but most were too worn out to make a sound. Right at the corner, where the market was held, the little things were dropped on to the ground, where they lay as if dead. There were only two buyers, fat, prosperous-looking men in black smocks. These took hold of the poor little beasts in turn to weigh them, made their offer of two, or at the most three francs, and if it was accepted piled the little things in heaps upon one another. In due time they were picked up and pushed into

chicken crates about eight inches high. We hope to be able to put the French S.P.C.A. on to this disgusting little market. It is as revolting an exhibition of cruelty to animals as one could see.

Arthur Pearson had practically written nothing since the days when *Pearson's Weekly* had become a successfully established property. But when it was evident that his days of newspaper direction were coming to an end, he seemed eager to write again. In addition to this diary, he wrote about this time five excellent little tales of the Alps, which were printed under an assumed name in one of his papers. Even the editor did not know that they were the work of "the Chief."

On March 17th, 1911, Arthur Pearson received a telegram from England which brought his long walking tour to an abrupt end. The *Standard* was already sold, but since he had been unable personally to supervise the business of the *Daily Express*, things had not been going too well in that office, and it was necessary for him, so far as he could, once more to take over the direction of affairs. He went back to Frensham Place and started his old plan of coming up to town every day by train.

In the summer of 1911 he spent three months living in the New Forest in caravans, coming to town once a week. He took a party of five with him, including his then secretary, Philip

O'Farrell, and contrived to do a certain amount of work in the open air. His week-end parties often consisted of a dozen people. He himself insisted on doing all the shopping and cooking, and his guests had to do the washing-up.

In the winter of 1911 Arthur Pearson went to Cannes. In 1912 he sold his interest in the *Daily Express*, and spent several months at the Italian Lakes, going on to Porto Fina and to Florence. In 1913 he went with Lady Pearson to Vienna to consult the great Austrian oculist, Professor Fuchs. After an elaborate examination the Professor advised him to put his affairs in order and if possible to give up active business. Pearson asked him how long it would be before he was actually blind, and the Professor told him that he thought certainly within two years. After they returned to the hotel, Lady Pearson telephoned to Professor Fuchs and asked for the actual truth, and she was told that the two years would probably be less than one year. When Lady Pearson went back to her room she found her husband lying on a sofa. "I shall soon be blind," he said to her, "but I will never be *a* blind man, I am going to be *the* blind man."

The blow, of course, was not unexpected, but when it came, it found him determined not to be beaten. He had thought it all out for himself. Partial blindness had given him an insight into the possibilities of life without eyes,

and he had already arrived at the faith which he put into words some years afterwards :

“To be blind may mean to be helpless, incompetent, perpetually resigned to a life of dull ineptitude. To be blind may mean to carry on one’s life almost as before, to put up with minor inconvenience in conquering problems as they present themselves. Lots of people see without perceiving, blind people learn to perceive without seeing.”

From the very moment that he was a blind man, Arthur Pearson began to work for the blind.

In October 1913 he joined the council of the National Institute for the Blind, and in the following January he was appointed its treasurer. He at once devoted the whole of his unimpaired energy to the work of enlarging the Institute’s activities and making them more efficient. How the Institute has grown since his connection with it is shown by the fact that its gross income for the year ending December 31st, 1913, was £8010, while the income for the year ending March 31st, 1921, was £358,174. These figures are extraordinarily significant, and they are a dramatic proof of what Arthur Pearson’s blind life and his boundless enthusiasm have meant for the sightless people of this country.

Early in 1914 Arthur Pearson set himself to the task of raising the £30,000 necessary to equip the National Institute of the Blind’s

building in Great Portland Street, and to form an endowment fund for the production and cheapening of embossed books. Sir Vansittart Bowater, then the Lord Mayor of London, opened a special Mansion House Fund, and among the first donations to be acknowledged were £1000 from Lord Northcliffe, £1000 from Arthur Pearson himself, and £1000 from Lord Rothermere. Arthur Pearson issued the following appeal to the press :

“ I am venturing to make myself the mouth-piece of the many blind and partially blind folk who will benefit by your kindly and able advocacy, and to thank you most sincerely on their behalf.

“ The lives of the blind—particularly of the poor blind—are very dull and monotonous, and, short of restoring to them their sight, nothing can be given them of greater value than books. I was discussing the question of our campaign the other day with a lady who has been doing most excellent work among the poor for many years. She said : ‘ I think you are making too much of this question of books for blind people. In my work I often come across blind poor folk, and my observation leads me to believe that they do not want books. They are content to sit still with their hands folded.’

“ Now, here was an objection which seems to me to be a great argument in favour of our campaign. I do not want these poor blind people to go on being content to sit with folded hands. I want those folded hands to be busy

passing to and fro along the lines of Braille type, and those unimaginative minds to be filled with pictures of the great and wonderful world which their owners cannot see.

“The rising generation of the blind have all been taught to read with their finger-tips, and are only too eager for the literature which is now so scarce because it is so dear.

“And when Braille books are cheap—as I firmly believe a generous public will enable us to make them—the older generation of blind people, and those who, like myself, are not stone blind, but can no longer see to read, will also welcome and enjoy these books.

“Old folk whose sight is lost or seriously impaired can find a new joy in life by reading Braille books. I am happy to say that I have in the last few months persuaded several such people to learn Braille, with the happiest results.

“Braille is not difficult to learn. I mastered its principles in a fortnight; and once that is done it only remains to acquire speed by practice. Expert blind readers can read Braille as swiftly as a sighted person can read rapidly aloud; so books are quickly devoured, and new ones as quickly in demand, for the blind, with their inability to enjoy the ordinary forms of relaxation, have much time for reading.

“A vigorous and intelligent young man who was doing well in Canada until he recently lost his sight suddenly, and was in consequence obliged to return to his people at home, applied to me the other day for work in connection with our campaign. I was able to give him this; and in thanking me he said:

““I want to help to spread Braille reading,

for, as you know, the loss of sight takes the spirit out of a man ; and I only began to get mine back when I mastered Braille. It is an incredible help.'

" I hope that those of your readers who have decided to help charities by testamentary bequests, will not mind my venturing to suggest the inclusion of this institution among their benefactions."

King George opened the Institute's buildings on March 19th, and immediately afterwards Arthur Pearson arranged with the Marconi Company to send out the first wireless appeal on record to every ship with whom the operator at Poldhu in Cornwall could get in touch. The appeal ran as follows :

" King George, in opening the new premises of the National Institute for the Blind, wished God-speed to the appeal for books in Braille for the sightless, which His Majesty said would ' break down the barriers shutting out the blind from the common interests of life.'

" King George further said, ' I am confident your appeal for funds will stir the imagination of many who unreflectingly enjoy the blessings of sight.'

" Books in Braille are practically the only solace of the blind, and, in view of His Majesty's speech which guarantees the genuineness and urgency of this appeal, may we ask you to arrange during the voyage subscriptions to this first appeal on record made by wireless. The appeal is made to all on board British ships, and

even the sympathetic friends on ships flying other flags who are grateful that they are not blind. Kindly send the proceeds to the Lord Mayor's Fund for the Blind, Mansion House, London. This message sent you gratis by the kindness of the Marconi Company."

In addition to the direct result of this appeal, its novelty and dramatic originality meant columns of newspaper publicity, and Arthur Pearson once more proved himself the greatest press agent in history. The descriptive writer was supplied with a perfect subject. One writer said :

"The wireless call for help from the sightless will have reached the voyaging millionaire in his thousand guinea suite and the men who do their rough business on the wireless fitted trawlers of the North Sea. The appeal will go on and on, it will be a new Drake's drum beating round the world from the flower-fringed verge of England to the gloomy Magellan Straits, past the corner of the Horn through which Drake himself wound his way to the conquest of the Spanish Main. It will raise the drowsy languor of a trooper in the Red Sea and startle the pearl fishers of the Pacific. The outward bound emigrant, with all his life before him, will hear of it in common with the colonial going home with all his life behind him. It will echo up the Adriatic and drift to the sealers lying fearfully at anchor in the white fog of the frozen north. It is a great appeal sent forth in a great way."

Mr. Filson Young wrote the following fine comment on the wireless appeal :

“ A flash of ‘ wireless ’ over half the world on Saturday night, enlisting the greatest of invisible forces in the service of those who cannot see—how beautiful an incident this in the history of mankind.

“ Wireless telegraphy is the most modern of man’s powers ; charity, I suppose, the most ancient of his virtues. Their aerial union and voyage of mercy is a reassurance that to be up to date it is not necessary to be heartless, and that you may be kind in the most complicated as well as in the simplest of ways.

“ I am glad that it was Mr. Arthur Pearson who thought of this dramatic way of helping his fund for providing books for the blind ; it is worthy of the hustler as he was called in the days before he, too, entered the dark kingdom. It is the old touch, the grand manner asserting itself once again.

“ It is literally true to say that Mr. Pearson’s own blindness, whatever the weight of affliction may mean to him, has been a blessing to every blind person in Great Britain ; and that cannot be an unrelieved sorrow which can bring gladness to so many. But to that end we must all help him. Darkness cries out for light ; and though the windows of the flesh are closed for ever to these thousands, the windows of the mind may, through the Braille books, be thrown open to the sun.

“ Are they, to whom sight of mankind is impossible, to remain cut off from knowledge of the thoughts and deeds of mankind ? It

need not be. This man says it must not be. Good friends, with your help it shall not be."

Referring to Arthur Pearson's new activity, Mr. G. A. B. Dewar declared that he had become the "hustler for humanity, blind humanity."

In May 1914 Arthur Pearson persuaded the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and the leaders of the Free Churches to arrange a Special Sunday service of thanksgiving for the blessing of sight, and over 40,000 such services were held simultaneously throughout the country. The Bishop of London preached at St. Paul's Cathedral, and in the course of his sermon he said: "It is not alone that books are wanted for the blind, teachers are needed to instruct them how to read those books. The outlook of the blind is quite a different thing from what it was even a hundred years ago, but there is one great obstacle which is not moved yet and which we can help to remove, and that is the excessive cost of books in Braille. A book will cost us five shillings, but the same book will cost the blind thirty shillings or forty shillings and perhaps more, and the main purpose of this great effort which is being made throughout the English-speaking world to-day is to enable the blind to get books as cheaply as those who see. We cannot make them see the springtime, but, at least, let them read beautiful descriptions of what it looks like."

In an appeal which he himself wrote at this time in *Pearson's Weekly*, referring to Braille books for the blind, Arthur Pearson said: "They are so bulky and so costly to produce that a copy of *Ivanhoe* which you can buy for sixpence in one little volume occupies in Braille six volumes, as large as a sheet of foolscap paper and nearly three inches thick, and costs to make nineteen shillings and sixpence. Now, I want these books to be much cheaper; in fact, I really want them to be so cheap that they can almost, if not quite, be given away, for I think the blind people who miss most of the fun and amusement which others can enjoy should be given to the full the opportunity of solacing the hours that hang so heavy on their hands by reading—all kinds of reading—books that educate, books that amuse, books that stimulate mental activity, books that tell the blind all the wonderful things in the world which they can never see."

It should be added that among the distinguished persons who backed Arthur Pearson in his first campaign for the blind were the King and Queen, Queen Alexandra, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Mr. Asquith, Lord Curzon, the Bishop of London, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Reading, Lord Roberts, the Chief Rabbi, Mr. John Redmond, and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald the well-known leader of the Labour

Party. All opinions were well represented among his supporters. No prejudice could prevent men of good intent from sympathising with so fine an enterprise. When war broke out in August, Arthur Pearson had succeeded in raising nearly £60,000. The Council of the National Institute for the Blind said in their annual report :

“ To have enlisted sympathy and help in every quarter of the globe and to have raised such a handsome sum in a few months was a feat beyond all praise and one which few, very few, would have had the courage to undertake. It was given only to those who worked with the President day by day to realise with what help, resourcefulness, persistent effort and fixed determination, he laboured early and late to stir up interest in the cause he had so much at heart.”

Arthur Pearson's determination that the blind should be given as full an opportunity as possible for sharing the life and interests of the world around them is shown again by the fact that the Braille publications issued immediately after the outbreak of war included *Why We are at War ; The Germans, their Empire, how They made It ; The Germans, what they Covet*. He persuaded the Carnegie Trust to make large grants to the book funds, and the number of publications in Braille increased each year despite all the difficulties of the war.

In 1916 the Institute opened a home for blind babies at Chorley Wood. The home was christened "Sunshine House," and both Queen Mary and Queen Alexandra took an active personal interest in its welfare. In 1921 the Institute opened a college for blind girls, and vastly improved the buildings of the school for blind boys at Worcester. The work of looking after the interests of blind civilians increased year by year in spite of all the calls of the war, and in 1921 the Institute had on its registers over seven thousand names. Work was found for blind workers. Training was given in various occupations. Relief was arranged for the helpless, and in the Institute depots goods made by blind men and women were sold to the value of £12,000. The report for 1919 says with justifiable pride that "a number of blind people have been rescued either from a state of lethargy, from rapid deterioration, or from utter despair." Among the many activities of the Institute mentioned in its latest reports are a guest house for blind men and women over fifty who have seen better days, homes for women in Clifton and Brighton, and a woman's hostel in London.

I have said several times that Arthur Pearson loved collecting money. It was a hobby of his, and he could always be relied on to do the thing that interested him supremely well. His appeal for the National Institute and particularly for St. Dunstan's were made

throughout the country systematically and with a world of ingenuity, and the local blind institutions found that Arthur Pearson, with his more dramatic methods, was collecting money that might have gone to them. This was manifestly unfair and undesirable, and a plan was devised by which, in many instances, the collection of funds was left to the Institute, and it made allocations to the local institutions sufficient for them to carry on their work satisfactorily. In most cases they financially benefited from this new arrangement. From the last balance sheet I see that in one year nearly £7000 was granted to the Cardiff Institute for the Blind, that £4500 was donated to the Liverpool Workshops and Home-Teaching Society for the Outdoor Blind, that £2250 was granted to Henshaw's Institution for the Blind at Manchester, that £3000 was granted to the Moon Society for the Blind at Brighton, £3500 to the Bradford Royal Institution for the Blind, £7500 to the Hull Blind Institution, and £4400 to the Leeds United Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb. In all £55,000 was handed over by the Institute to these local institutions.

The Institute now has fifteen branches, the work covering the whole of England and Wales. Each branch has its own secretary, whose business it is to raise money in the most ingenious and effective way that he can devise, to look after the welfare of blind persons who live in his

district, and to represent the interests of the blind on the local administrative councils.

Arthur Pearson was not directly responsible for the passing of the Blind Persons Act, but it was undoubtedly his enthusiasm for the blind that indirectly caused this Act of Parliament to be passed. He was Chairman of the Institute's Standing Committee, and this office involved great responsibility, much time, and not a little anxiety. It is interesting to note that he was associated in the work of the National Institute with other distinguished blind men, eager to help their fellows, among them Sir Washington Ranger, Captain E. B. B. Towse, S.C.; Mr. H. M. Taylor, F.R.S., and Mr. G. F. Mowatt, J.P. Arthur Pearson's great idea of caring for blinded soldiers originated with his work at the Institute, which contributed a thousand pounds towards the early expenses.

On the outbreak of war, at the request of the Prince of Wales, Arthur Pearson transferred his activity and his enthusiasm to the Prince of Wales's Fund. At this time of his life Arthur Pearson was perhaps at his very best. He had offices in St. James's Palace. He was doing work of the first national interest and importance. He was incidentally indulging in his favourite hobby—collecting money for a good purpose—and he was backed by all the resources of the State. Tens of thousands of

postcards were sent out from his office and thousands of telegrams were dispatched. Appeals were made to every class in the way calculated to be most effective in each case, and in six months Arthur Pearson succeeded in collecting over a million pounds.

He and Lady Pearson were also the organisers and directors of Queen Mary's Work for Women Fund. Remembering the demand for women's labour in the later years of the war, it is perhaps hard for us to realise that in its first months there was a large amount of unemployment and distress among women workers. The fund was raised to open workshops in the West End of London, to start domestic economy training centres and to assist unemployed girls to emigrate to the Dominions. A thrilling Christmas time appeal resulted in a sum of nearly nine thousand pounds being collected, and altogether considerably over a hundred thousand pounds went into the fund before its usefulness came to an end. In connection with this fund Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton published *Princess Mary's Gift Book*, of which, thanks to Arthur Pearson's enthusiastic advertising, over half a million copies were sold. Sir Ernest Hodder Williams has a vivid recollection of his frequent visits in these days to Arthur Pearson at St. James's Palace, where, full of impetuous enthusiasm, he was working in a room with half a dozen telephones, making pencil notes with

the help of a ratchet which he had just learned to use.

It might have been supposed that Arthur Pearson had found the war work for which his abilities were most suited, but he was working for the sighted—and soon the blind called again to the blind.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. DUNSTAN'S

IN January and February 1915 I was in Paris for three or four weeks on a special journalistic mission. When I returned home I received a letter from Arthur Pearson asking me to lunch at a hostel for blinded soldiers that he had recently opened in the Bayswater Road. While he was still busy with the Prince of Wales's Fund, he was told that a blinded Belgian soldier had been brought to one of the London military hospitals. Arthur Pearson had already learned to regard himself as the blind man whose job it was to look after all other blind men. He immediately went to see the Belgian soldier and gossiped with him, endeavouring, in his own hearty way, to inspire the man with some confidence for the future. Then he heard that two blind British soldiers were in a hospital at Chelsea. He promptly went to see them too, and he at once resolved that some plan must be devised to give the men who had lost their sight in the war a new start in life when they were discharged from hospital and the doctors had done all that could be done for them.

The hostel in the Bayswater Road was the beginning of the great work of teaching ex-soldiers how to be blind and at the same time how to be happy and useful. On the day of my visit, Arthur Pearson suggested that it might interest the men if after lunch I would tell them something about life in the French capital under war conditions. The hospital had only just been opened, and I always remember with gratification that I was the first of the many sighted persons whom Arthur Pearson invited to talk to the blinded soldiers and sailors whose welfare was, from 1915 to the end of his life, his absorbing preoccupation. If my memory serves me, there were only four blind men in the Bayswater Road house, and I recall a small incident that illustrates Arthur Pearson's methods, and is at least some explanation of his success. Just before we left, Arthur Pearson had a short chat with the matron which I overheard, and she told him that one of the men was rather despondent. "Despondent," said Arthur Pearson; "what on earth has he got to be despondent about?" Such a remark from a sighted person would have been a callous insult. But Arthur Pearson himself was blind. He sent for the man and talked to him in what seemed to me a splendid brotherly manner, repeating what he was afterwards to describe as the gospel of St. Dunstan's. "There is much that we cannot see, there is one thing we will

not see if we can help it, and that is the gloomy side of our lives."

There was a community of character as well as of affliction between Arthur Pearson and the men whom he was to gather under his wing at St. Dunstan's. He had seen the world, and his memory was stored with pictures of what he had seen. So were theirs. He was eager and energetic and healthy and keen. So were these young men, stricken in the heyday of their youth. He was determined never to be content with a half life, to minimise the results of his loss and to develop to the full the faculties that remained. It was easier to inspire the men of St. Dunstan's with the same ambitions than it would have been if they had been old and feeble or if they had been blind from birth.

On March 26th, 1915, the hostel was moved from the Bayswater Road to St. Dunstan's in Regent's Park. The house belonged to Mr. Otto Kahn, the New York banker, and it was placed at Arthur Pearson's disposal absolutely free of charge. St. Dunstan's has all the advantages of a large country house with a wonderful garden, though it is within a couple of miles of Piccadilly Circus. When the move was made, Arthur Pearson had sixteen men to care for. Before the end of the war there were seventeen hundred names on his books, and he was able to say that "with practically no exceptions all the soldiers and sailors of

the British Imperial forces came under my care." Immediately after its establishment, St. Dunstan's was recognised by the military authorities, but no blinded soldier was compelled to go to Arthur Pearson against his will. An effort was, however, made to send all the blinded men to the same hospital in London. Arthur Pearson made regular visits to this hospital, talked to the patients, told them what was being done at St. Dunstan's, and assured them that, with courage and training, life for them might still be successful and happy.

Arthur Pearson gave to every new man whom he visited a watch specially made for the use of the blind, with hands slightly raised and dots to indicate the place of the numerals. This gift was characteristic of his thoroughness. The newly blinded man lying in a hospital cot always wants to know the time. With his Pearson watch he was able to tell the time for himself. It gave him pleasure and hope to discover that there was something at least that he was able to do like other people. He began to understand that his fingers could, to some extent, replace his eyes.

The natural tendency of the men when they were discharged from hospital was to go home to their wives or their mothers. They had pensions, sufficient, anyhow, to protect them from actual want, and a good many of them were inclined to throw up their hands and

become mere dull loafers through life. But Arthur Pearson would not let one of them escape from his meshes without an effort. They were invited to come to St. Dunstan's and talk to the men who were there. Their relatives were invited to come with them. At St. Dunstan's they met men who had been with them in hospital and who had been learning to live while they had been wasting their time at home. They began to realise that it was a fatal thing for a blind man to let himself be the victim of love; to allow every trifling thing to be done for him by affectionate relatives. If his life was to be endurable, he must learn to do things for himself. His relatives, if they had any common sense, learned the same lessons from St. Dunstan's, and the visitor almost always became an inmate.

The first incident of life at St. Dunstan's was a long talk with Arthur Pearson. In the first chapter of this book I have quoted a blinded officer's account of his experiences of these remarkable interviews which sounded the keynote of the St. Dunstan's work and were the revelation of Arthur Pearson's character—interviews which hundreds of blind Englishmen in the world to-day recall with the keenest gratitude and pleasure. Arthur Pearson said, first of all, that St. Dunstan's was not an "institution" but a guest-house. There were rules, of course, as there must be when a number of men are living together, but the rules were

as few as possible, and to a large extent the men themselves maintained such discipline as was necessary. After explaining this, Pearson talked about the future. He assumed success as a matter of course. He discussed with the man the best trade for him to learn, and then the recreation which he most preferred. He would suggest that the new inmate should take up rowing. He would ask if he would like to join the debating club. As Arthur Pearson talked, his words inspired confidence. After half an hour the man, who before had only half believed that life for him could be anything but darkness, knew that he could conquer, and was eager to begin to learn how to conquer.

During the war certain people used to express fear of going to St. Dunstan's because they anticipated that gloom must necessarily brood over this dwelling-place of the blind. As a matter of fact it was one of the cheeriest houses in London, a veritable home of happiness. The great army of men and women who helped Arthur Pearson in his work, the majority of them giving up their whole time without any payment whatever, were no more cheerful than the active, healthy, eager young blind men who were learning in an atmosphere of good-fellowship to start life again.

Arthur Pearson once wrote :

“ It is a claim which I am justified in making,

that St. Dunstan's is one of the most cheerful places in the kingdom. To the public I say : ' Do not pity these blinded men, give them all the sympathy in the world, give them all the help you possibly can, encourage them in their growing spirit of independence ; when you walk with them guide them as little as possible, when you talk with them do not talk to them as men cut off from all the beauty of the world and of the passing interests of the day. If they have set themselves to forget what they have suffered and what they are suffering, is it for you to remind them ? Do not pity the blinded soldiers, but try to understand them. Let your consolation take the form of encouragement.' Of all the handicaps that a man may have to face in his own person, blindness is, in some ways, the most severe ; though they rise superior to it, it does not change the fact that these men are blind, without sight ' of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year, or man, or woman.' They can never see again the faces of those they love, they can never see again the homes to which they have returned from the trenches, they can never see again one ray of colour, or one sign of movement. These men are indeed remarkable for their bearing which is so resolute, and for their courage which is so unflagging ; they are creating a new interest in the whole world of the blind."

The cheerfulness was almost universal, and it lasted when the St. Dunstan's training came to an end. A colleague of a blind worker, who had been engaged from St. Dunstan's, told



Photo. Reginald Haines

WITH PART OF HIS COLLECTION OF IVORIES AT FRENHAM PLACE, 1909.

Arthur Pearson: "He is ever a source of wonder to the rest of us, and without doubt the most cheerful man in the building."

Eight trades and occupations were taught at St. Dunstan's: massage, shorthand writing, telephone operating, poultry farming, carpentry, mat-making, boot-repairing and basket-making. Netting in many forms was also taught, but Arthur Pearson never regarded this as more than a paying hobby. Every man was, of course, taught to read Braille. At St. Dunstan's men learned in six to nine months what it took four to five years to teach blind men in other institutions, and Arthur Pearson ascribed this rapid success to the fact that the men were young, that they were enthusiastic, that they were not worked for too many hours a day, and that most of the teachers were blind. He said: "When a blinded man with that horrible feeling of helplessness which first overcomes him, particularly if he tries to do something, finds that the man who is teaching him is blind himself, he thinks at once, 'I am not being asked to do something which is impossible by some one who does not understand. I am being shown the right way. This man who is blind knows what he is doing, and I, too, can do it.'"

Arthur Pearson insisted that whatever the blind learned to do they must do perfectly. If a sighted man fails in his job, his failure is ascribed to carelessness or lack of training. If

a blind man fails his failure is naturally put down to his blindness, and the idea becomes common that blindness is an unconquerable handicap, and that the blind worker is necessarily incompetent. Arthur Pearson therefore always insisted at St. Dunstan's that if the blind worker was to be a success, he must not only be as good as the sighted, but just a little better.

Massage was a new occupation for the blind, and in nothing has St. Dunstan's had more complete success. Before they were allowed to practise the blind men had to pass the examination of the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseurs. They had to be taught anatomy, physiology and pathology, in addition to manipulative dexterity. Before the end of the war sixty blind men from St. Dunstan's were earning good livings as masseurs. Hospital superintendents were loud in their praise, and there is now actually a Society of Blind Masseurs, the members of which are living busy professional lives and earning comfortable incomes.

The following is among the many tributes to the skill of the blind masseur. It was received from Sir Robert Jones, the orthopædist, at whose establishment at Alder Hey, Liverpool, several of the St. Dunstan's men were employed :

“The work which your blind masseurs do is very exceptional in quality. They are in

every sense of the term a great success. I find them all intelligent and possessed of a wonderful gift of touch, together with keen enthusiasm for their work. Apart from their qualities as masseurs, I think they have an extraordinarily good psychological effect upon their patients. I consider institutions which secure the services of these men trained at St. Dunstan's very fortunate."

Before they lost their sight many of these men were comparatively uneducated and had earned their livings as manual workers. In their cases it can be almost said that blindness, far from being a handicap, has made life for them more interesting and more useful.

Poultry farming might have seemed perhaps a strange occupation for the blind. The men were first taught to tell the different breeds of poultry by feeling the combs, wattles, weight, and plumage. They were then taught the different varieties of food, distinguishing them by either touch, smell, or taste. Afterwards they were taught how to mix and prepare the food. They were taught how to construct chicken houses, and they were initiated into the mysteries of artificial incubation. They were also taught gardening and simple carpentry, and the majority of the St. Dunstan's poultry farmers are now making excellent livings.

Arthur Pearson was always a great worker,

but, as the record of his life proves, he loved to play as well as to work, and he brought the same energy and enthusiasm to his play as to his work. When he started St. Dunstan's he resolved that four or five hard hours' work a day was enough for the men, and he acted on the principle that nothing would help the blind soldier more to forget his blindness than to discover that he could still enjoy himself in his hours of leisure. The Regent's Park lake adjoins the ground of St. Dunstan's, and rowing is the best of all exercises for the man who has lost his sight. "To the blinded man there is joy in being out on the water, pleasure in the exercise, pleasure in handling the oars, pleasure in the sense of movement, pleasure in the sounds that are full of pictorial suggestion." Rowing soon became St. Dunstan's favourite amusement, and Arthur Pearson has recorded with gratitude how the sighted helped the men. In the summer time a whole army of girls regularly got up early in the morning to steer the St. Dunstan's boats for an hour or two before going on to their shops and offices. There were generally over fifty boats with blind oarsmen on the Regent's Park lake by half-past six on a summer morning. The St. Dunstan's men accepted the Arthur Pearson principle, that everything that they did must be done supremely well. After a while they were no longer content to paddle about on the lake. They wanted

really to row, and they wanted to race. A coach was promptly secured. Selected men were put into training, and at the end of 1915 St. Dunstan's challenged Worcester College for the Blind to row on the Thames, and St. Dunstan's won two events out of three. After that St. Dunstan's had its own annual regatta, and in 1917 their leading four defeated a Putney crew of well-known rowers by two and a half lengths on a mile course.

No permanent record of Arthur Pearson's life could be complete without the retelling of the details of the miracle of St. Dunstan's. Any summer morning in the years of the war there might be seen on the Regent's Park lake two or three hundred young men in shorts and sweaters full of eager life, looking forward to the future with the courage and the certainty that should characterise youth—all of them blind, and all of them a few months before despondent, hopeless, broken. They owed their new life to the co-operation of many kindly and devoted men and women, and to a highly efficient common-sense scheme of education; but they owed it most of all to the inspiration of one man whose sole idea of living was never to be beaten, whose sole consideration, when loss occurred, was how to make the fullest use of that which remained.

Rowing was not the only outdoor sport of St. Dunstan's. Athletic sports were a regular

occurrence. Physical drill was given daily by blind sergeant-majors. Tandem cycles were part of the St. Dunstan's machinery. Swimming was almost as popular as rowing and wrestling, and boxing took place regularly in the gymnasium. Arthur Pearson always loved dancing, and dancing was soon the most popular indoor recreation at St. Dunstan's. The first dance was given in honour of the lady coxswains as an acknowledgment of their early morning zeal, and Arthur Pearson has himself related with glee the success of that first evening—the shyness of the ladies, who had to reverse the general order and first approach their partners, and the enthusiasm of the men who had professed themselves indifferent to such amusement. Open-air dances and even fancy dress balls were frequently held at St. Dunstan's in the later days of the war.

The result of the dances and of the early mornings on the Regent's Park lake were many romances that eventually led to weddings. Arthur Pearson said : “ To these men who have left St. Dunstan's to live at home, it is impossible to exaggerate the help and encouragement that a wife can give. Among the men who have entered at St. Dunstan's, 448 were married before they lost their sight, and 227 were married while they were learning to be blind, or shortly after they had mastered the lesson, and often it has happened that they have

found a partner from among the devoted women who in some way or other were helping them in their re-education."

Every morning at St. Dunstan's the letters were delivered to the men by a number of V.A.D.s whose business, of course, it was to read the contents. After this, at nine o'clock, a whistle blew and the men gathered round to listen to the reading of the morning paper. They were, of course, vastly interested in the war news, and this was generally read at length and was followed by a summary of the general news. Arthur Pearson recognised that it was a good thing for his men to know the details of the struggle which had cost them individually so much, and he arranged with the War Office that officers, occupying important positions, should regularly visit St. Dunstan's to explain the varying phases of the war. Arthur Pearson himself gave them frequent informal talks, and there were regular meetings of the Debating Society at which he almost always took the chair. The debates were generally on subjects of public interest, and the idea was to teach men to speak in public so that when they left the institution they might take their part in the life of their localities as members of the local councils and so on. One St. Dunstan's man, a Canadian, is now a member of one of the Canadian provincial legislatures. The men were taught to play all kinds of games—dominoes, chess,

draughts, and cards. As I suppose is well known, the cards which blind men use are marked at one corner with Braille dots and are recognised by touch. Many blind men play bridge particularly well, and generally all the sighted players have to do is to read the dummy hand once and then mention each card as it is played.

Music has always been a joy to the blind, since it is the one art which they approach without any handicap. Many of the men at St. Dunstan's had excellent voices, and a few of them were trained to become professional singers. Other men played the piano, the violin and other instruments, and many of them played the banjo and the mandoline. A St. Dunstan's band was formed, and concerts were a regular feature of the St. Dunstan's life.

Both in work and in play Arthur Pearson always insisted that while the blind should determine to do everything that they possibly could do, they should never attempt to do things which they obviously could not do. One night when I was dining with the blinded officers at Portland Place, one of them asked Arthur Pearson if he thought some device could be invented to enable blind men to play billiards. The suggestion was at once severely snubbed. "For Heaven's sake," said Sir Arthur Pearson, "don't let us make ourselves ridiculous. It's absurd to try and play a game like billiards, which absolutely depends on keen sight. There

are so many things that we can do without making asses of ourselves." Indeed, the marvel is how many things there were that blind men succeeded in doing. Rowing and swimming depend no more on sight than walking, but the way in which parties of blind officers used to ride with perhaps one sighted guard on the downs north of Brighton on a Sunday morning, was something of a marvel. Arthur Pearson himself was riding on the downs ten days before his death on what, to many sighted men, would have been an uncomfortably mettlesome horse.

While the ambition of St. Dunstan's was to enable blinded soldiers to earn their living, this material consideration was not the most important part of its basis. The State has quite properly seen to it that no man blinded in the service of his country shall ever suffer actual want, and the pensions for the loss of sight are certainly adequate—not a penny too much, but not unworthy of a generous and a grateful country—but in no case are they sufficient to ensure a man, to whatever class he may belong, anything more than the necessities of life. The blind man who lives on his pension must necessarily lead a narrow life, and the danger to a sightless man to have no occupation and few pleasures and interests is far greater than it is to a man with all his faculties. Left alone, he is almost certain to grow lethargic, morose, and

unhappy. It was to prevent this sort of thing happening that the St. Dunstan's scheme was devised. The consequence of the training at St. Dunstan's and of months spent in an atmosphere of energy, enthusiasm, and goodwill has been to make the men's lives wider and more interesting than they were before the loss of sight. Arthur Pearson always regarded independence as the greatest of all human possessions. He himself hated being dependent on anybody for anything. When he lost his sight he realised that he must try and do more small things for himself than he had done when he could see, and almost the first thing that he did was to discharge his valet. He could not afford to allow the trivial arrangements of his life to be looked after by another person.

Writing of blindness, he said that the greatest disadvantage is unquestionably the loss of one's independence. This loss of independence, which at first seems so hopeless of recovery, is regained in very large measure as time goes on. Ability once more to read, to conduct one's correspondence, and to get about with ease and certainty in fairly familiar surroundings, are all of them things which tend to a feeling of recovered independence. But even to those who readjust their lives most rapidly and successfully, real independence must always be denied, though, after all, blind people are not so terribly singular in this respect as at first

blush seems to be the case, for all members of a civilised community are more or less dependent upon each other. The men at St. Dunstan's were taught to be as independent as possible. They were made to realise that not only could they learn how to minimise the disadvantages of their loss, but that the loss actually brought with it some incidental advantages. I again quote Arthur Pearson's own words :

“ First among the advantages of blindness I will place the unquestionably improved mentality which is quite sure to result. The average human being takes himself as he finds himself and leaves it at that. For much of his time his doings are practically automatical. It costs him no effort of thought to dress, to eat, to move about, but when blindness comes upon a man, all this automatical freedom goes. Practically every action of his life demands thought, and closely concentrated thought at that. This continual mental exercise, this necessity for making the very most of all indications which help one to be normal, has unquestionably a stimulating, beneficial effect upon the brain, while the increased necessity for exercising the memory tends greatly to improve that most valuable faculty. As the years roll by this necessity for constant thought becomes less and less, and by the time this stage is reached, the mental improvement has been effected, and I am quite certain that almost every man who passed through St. Dunstan's would agree with me that from the mental

point of view he is a far superior human being to the one he was when he possessed his sight."

It was characteristic of the man that he should find an advantage in so grievous an affliction as blindness, and it was equally characteristic of his methods that he should teach the men under his care that, while in some respects they were at a disadvantage as compared with men who could see, it was possible for them to use their blindness as a means of acquiring an acute mentality that a sighted man could hardly hope to attain. With this there comes the development of other faculties. A blind man's sense of touch, for example, is far more subtle than the sense of touch possessed by the majority.

The training went on day after day—training in handicrafts, training in play, training in independence, training in manliness, training in cheerfulness. There was no gloom at St. Dunstan's, no fear and amazing little regret. "I shall never forget my visit to St. Dunstan's," Lord Derby has said, "and the extraordinary pluck, courage, and cheerfulness shown by all its inmates." This was the testimony of every sighted visitor. "After a visit to St. Dunstan's," wrote Charles Marriott, the well-known art critic, "I am inclined to say that only the blind really see."

It soon became clear to Arthur Pearson that the work would only be half done if after their stay at St. Dunstan's the blind soldiers were turned out into the world to fend for themselves. So the Settlement and After-care Department was established under the direction of Captain Ian Fraser, the very able young ex-officer who lost his sight on the Somme, and who, since Arthur Pearson's death, has become the executive head of all the St. Dunstan's work. This Settlement and After-care Department is now the most important part of St. Dunstan's, and its utility will continue for many years to come.

When he leaves the Hostel, every St. Dunstan's man is given a complete set of tools and apparatus required for the particular trade which he has been taught, and he is assisted to set himself up in the necessary home and workshop. If he be a married man, he is given a weekly allowance for a year to help him to pay his rent until he begins regularly to add to his pension with his earnings. Local agents in every district in the United Kingdom keep in touch with the men, help them over temporary difficulties, and report their progress to the central office. These agents, too, help the blind workman to obtain orders, and interest influential local people in his welfare. The raw materials are supplied at a reasonable price, and St. Dunstan's purchases large quantities of leather, willows, yarn, wood, string, twine, and so on,

to supply to the boot-repairers, the basket-makers, the mat-makers, the carpenters, and the net-makers. Large quantities are naturally bought at a far more reasonable rate than small quantities, and St. Dunstan's supplies their workers with the material at cost price. In the same way the poultry farmers are supplied with their chicken food, and arrangements are made for payments to be made by instalments, and in the manner most convenient to men starting fresh in business. The men are regularly visited by experts in their various crafts, who criticise their work and make suggestions for improvement. Independent enterprise is encouraged and stimulated, but in some cases central depots were taken where the men's work is exhibited and sold.

Years before, Arthur Pearson had insisted that his publications should pay for contributions immediately they were accepted. He carried out the same principle with the St. Dunstan's men. Immediately work is sold at the depots, the maker gets his money. St. Dunstan's is an employment agency for its masseurs, its typists, and its telephonists, and it makes itself responsible for their continual employment. In some cases where men have lost a limb as well as their eyes, they are set up in small newsagents' and tobacconists' shops, nearly all of which have been conspicuous successes. While, as I have said, the pension for a blind

man and his dependents is not ungenerous, the Pensions Ministry pays nothing for children born to men after nine months from their discharge from the army, and in September 1917 Arthur Pearson started what he called the Blind Soldiers' Children Fund, which pays five shillings a week to every child born to a blinded soldier for whom the Government makes no provision. The payment of Government pensions to the men of St. Dunstan's is made through the St. Dunstan's organisation; and this is a great help, because corrections are easily made, the right amount of pension is insisted on, and special appeals can be successfully carried through. This Settlement and After-care Department incidentally means that the men who lived at St. Dunstan's never have really left it. They remain members of a large well-cared for family; they are sustained in the difficulties of life by the knowledge that they have behind them a powerful, sympathetic friend to whom they can always go with absolute confidence for advice and help. There is no qualification in the thoroughness of the organisation. Nothing that is practical and helpful has been forgotten.

During the winter of 1917, in order that he might more acutely realise the meaning of war and the experiences through which the St. Dunstan's men had passed, Arthur Pearson paid a visit to the British front in France with his

son Neville. He stopped with the press correspondents at the Château de Tramecourt, near Crécy. He visited Lord Horne, and he was particularly interested in the sniping school run by the late Hesketh Prichard, an old contributor of the Pearson publications. He climbed the Vimy Ridge, and here he narrowly escaped being a war casualty himself. A German shell exploded about twenty yards away and bespattered Pearson and his party with chunks of earth. At Souchez he clambered the slippery muddy hill to the "Pimple," a famous observation post, and was immensely interested when he was told that from this point the long, low-lying valley was visible from Lens to Douai. This visit to the front gave Arthur Pearson great pleasure. It was another link between him and his blinded soldiers. And his amazing power for realising scenes that he himself could not see, gave him an acute appreciation of the conditions and surroundings of modern war.

The swift training of blind men—and Arthur Pearson's scheme was both thorough and quick—naturally entailed the employment of a large number of sighted persons. Over seventeen hundred blind soldiers passed through St. Dunstan's—of these sixty-three were Canadians, seventy were Australians, ten were South Africans, and twenty New Zealanders—and over eight hundred people were in one capacity or another engaged in contributing to their welfare.

Nearly six hundred were women—matrons, V.A.D's, nurses, teachers of Braille, type-writing, and music, secretaries and women who came every day to the institution to read to the men and to take them for walks. The male staff included adjutants, oculists, doctors, chaplains, workshop teachers, poultry-farm instructors, accountants, orderlies, masseurs, chauffeurs, porters, gardeners, scouts, and the directors of the pension and after-care departments. The majority of the staff were unpaid, and many of the instructors were themselves blind. "In days when I could see," once wrote Arthur Pearson, "I had the direction of some big enterprises, but St. Dunstan's became the biggest individual business that I have ever conducted."

St. Dunstan's itself is a large mansion, but it soon became much too small for its purpose. When this happened, Mr. Otto Kahn allowed Arthur Pearson to erect buildings in the garden, which is the largest private garden in London, with the exception of Buckingham Palace. Then he borrowed from the authorities of the Baptist Church a house next door to St. Dunstan's, which had been used as a training college for ministers. Then a bungalow annex was built between the two houses. But even this accommodation was not enough. Three large houses were taken in Cornwall Terrace, and ten small houses in Titchfield Terrace were taken for the accommodation of V.A.D.s and the

relatives of the blind soldiers who came to London from time to time to visit St. Dunstan's. Soon Arthur Pearson felt the need of houses away from London where holidays could be spent and periods of convalescence could be passed. The Federation of Grocers' Association gave him a splendid house at Brighton, which will remain a holiday home for the men of St. Dunstan's as long as any of them are alive. Other generous sympathisers provided a house at Torquay, a convalescent home at Ilkley, and a large house at Blackheath. The blinded officers were housed in two houses in Portland Place, one of which was placed at Arthur Pearson's disposal by Sir John and Lady Stirling Maxwell. The officers had their holiday home at Brighton and a week-end residence at Bourne End. About a year before his death Arthur Pearson had to vacate St. Dunstan's itself, and he acquired the lease of St. John's Lodge in the Regent's Park Inner Circle, at one time the town house of the Marquis of Bute. St. John's Lodge is now the St. Dunstan's centre where the men, who remain under its care, receive exactly the same training that was given to much larger numbers during the war. Over thirty thousand men were discharged from the army with defective sight as the result of wounds. In some cases this defective sight has become absolute blindness. It has taken them longer to lose their sight than it took others, but they



Photo. Campbell & Gray

IN HIS ROOM IN THE OFFICES OF THE "STANDARD."

demand the same consideration and the same help, and it is these men who are now being trained by Captain Ian Fraser. As I write, there are some hundred and twenty men under his charge, and they still live in the houses in Cornwall Terrace. As the numbers grow fewer, they will both live and learn at St. John's Lodge.

Arthur Pearson laid it down that a man could be trained in simple occupations in from six to eight months, but massage and shorthand writing take a good deal longer. There are the exceptional cases of men who were badly wounded who are compelled periodically to spend months in hospital, and whose training has taken years instead of months. A few of these men still remain in St. Dunstan's care.

The blinded soldiers from the Dominions, lonely in darkness, far away from their kin, were treated by Arthur Pearson with special consideration.

"When a man from the Overseas Forces was brought to this country blinded, I at once wrote to his mother or wife, or other relative, if he had neither of these, a letter telling how my own experience had taught me that blindness did not mean mental or physical extinction, and giving as vivid a presentment as I could of the life of St. Dunstan's and its manifold activities.

"And this letter was generally the beginning of a prolonged correspondence, so that the relatives of the blinded soldiers were able to

know of the progress that was being made ; though I doubt if ever they were prepared to see such proficient blind men as they were ultimately to meet when the home-comer arrived back in whatever part of our far-reaching Dominions he lived."

In January 1919 Pearson paid a visit to Canada in order to see for himself how the Canadians who had been his guests were faring, and he brought back with him heartening knowledge of happiness and success.

In the 1920 St. Dunstan's report, Arthur Pearson wrote :

" Does any one in the world, I wonder, receive so many delightful letters as I do ? The post brings me a never-ending stream of them from all parts of the United Kingdom and of the British Empire, telling of lives filled with undreamt of happiness, and of success truly marvellous, such as has never been won by blinded men before.

" Letters from professional men who have returned to work hitherto unattempted by the blind ; letters from business men who are continuing the direction of important commercial undertakings ; letters from craftsmen who are making earnings fully on a par with those of sighted men in the same walks of industry ; letters from masseurs who are not only securing for themselves a comfortable competency, but are doing great good to others ; letters from poultry farmers telling of the success with which they are carrying on their little holdings ; letters

from men who are accomplishing secretarial work or operating telephone exchanges with a skill which is scarcely believable ; and many of these letters saying things about the work of St. Dunstan's which come straight from the hearts of those who have benefited by it, and go straight to the hearts of those who have been privileged to be responsible for its initiation and management.

"Often there comes to my mental vision a picture of the writers as I first met them, hopeless, despairing, and unable to imagine that any good thing was left for them in life. And then I see in my mind's eye these happy, resolute, competent men, who, in spite of their handicap, are showing that they can do their fair share in the work of the world. It is a picture of joyous contemplation the like of which can, I think, have been given to few to conjure up."

On another occasion he wrote :

"The test of St. Dunstan's, of the theories I had and the way they were put into practice by the men, lies in what these blinded soldiers make of their lives."

What are the men of St. Dunstan's making of their lives ? How far are they justifying Arthur Pearson's life and faith ? He set out to bring light where darkness reigned. Did he succeed ? There is ample evidence to justify a triumphantly affirmative answer to the question. Arthur Pearson, as I have said, was far more eager to teach men how to live than to teach

them how to earn a living. From the mass of letters, therefore, that he received from St. Dunstaners, I have selected these that testify to happiness and content rather than those which give details of business success. These letters are a magnificent proof that Arthur Pearson's lesson was learned, and that his men realised that "misfortune is not an excuse for sitting down and mourning one's helplessness, but the opportunity for demonstrating one's manliness." Thanks to Arthur Pearson, the blinded soldier (I quote his own words) "once more finds himself a capable citizen, competent, self-reliant, and able to regard blindness as it should be regarded—that is to say, not as an affliction, but as a handicap, which—like a keen golfer—he can steadily reduce."

The letters from which I quote are Arthur Pearson's splendid epitaph, of the declaration to the world: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." They are the brave songs of warriors, the happy words of the undaunted. Here are a few of the veritable cloud of witnesses.

LIEUTENANT W. G. T. PEMBERTON

When I went to St. Dunstan's it never occurred to me that I might go back to my old business as a chartered accountant. But while with you I saw that many had taken up their former work with extraordinary success.

Encouraged by this and by your optimism, I determined to try myself. I have been back at work now for six months, but though that is a very short time, I think there is no doubt that all is well. There were three problems : First, could I do the work ? Second, would my old clients have confidence in me ? Third, should I get fresh clients ?

About myself I think there is no question ; the work is not nearly so difficult as I expected, though there have been and will be difficulties to get over. All my old clients say they are absolutely satisfied ; they are business men, and I don't think over-sentimental. The third problem has, of course, yet to be solved, but already I have new work coming in. I have had on every side the best sort of help—that is to say, every one treats me as though nothing had happened. My life is now almost exactly what it was six years ago, and I owe that entirely to St. Dunstan's.

PTE. W. H. J. OXENHAM

My memories are often reflected back to when I was first at St. Mark's Hospital. I then thought that I was more or less no more good for this world, but I soon began to realise my error, and as time went on and I arrived at St. Dunstan's this became more confirmed than ever, and I feel now full of confidence for the future.

PTE. T. W. CHAMBERLAIN

Since I have been here I have got to know my way about the village, though it is a very

nasty one for anybody who has not seen it, as it is full of cross-roads, so that one has to be careful when out alone. I have now mastered it and can go about by myself, and call at any shop I want, so I do not think I have done badly, for I only came here at the end of January last year, and have never seen it with my eyes, as I am a complete stranger to the village. I think it is great sport to go out and try to find out where the different shops are, and I like doing it by myself. I sometimes got lost at first, but I had a tongue in my head and I asked the way if I could not find it, till I got to know exactly the whereabouts of any place, and now I can go anywhere I like.

CORPL. G. B. BIRKETT

The year I have spent at St. Dunstan's will remain in my memory for ever. To those who follow me I can wish no better wish than that they may have as happy a time at St. Dunstan's as I have had. . . . I hope to show my gratitude by, so far as lies in my power, "making good."

RIFLEMAN W. C. SMITH

I am doing my best to uphold the standard of St. Dunstan's. I have found a ready sale for my baskets, and have several orders for mats. I little thought two years ago, when lying in St. Mark's Hospital, that I should be able to accomplish the things that appear so easy to me now, thanks to you, Sir Arthur, and the instructors at St. Dunstan's.

I do not allow my Remington typewriter

to get rusty, and am still keeping up my Braille, being well supplied with Braille books from the library. I find my Braille writing-machine very useful in keeping my accounts without sighted help, and this makes me feel a little more independent.

I hardly know how to thank you for the benefit I have received at your hands, and I think I am speaking the truth when I say that I feel as normal as I did before losing my sight. I have to thank St. Dunstan's alone for this and for all the happiness and cheerfulness that I enjoy.

L.-CORPL. LEONARD HOWELL

I was very sorry indeed when my stay at St. Dunstan's came to an end. I did not like the thought of leaving such a jolly place behind me, but still the parting had to come sooner or later. I can honestly say that the time I spent at St. Dunstan's was the happiest time of my life, and I shall never forget the times I had there. On the other hand, I was very pleased indeed to know that I had passed my exams. and was ready to make a fresh start in the world. It was a very pleasant feeling I had when I held out my hand for my first week's wages. When I started writing this letter I did intend to try and thank you for your kindness to me, but I suddenly remembered what you said to me just before I left, that all the thanks you wanted was for us to make good. Well I am going to try my hardest to make good, the same as the rest of the boys who have left the old place.

CAPTAIN GILBERT NOBBS

Just a line to let you know the progress I am still making in my effort to forget I am blind. I told you some time ago that I was determined not to let it interfere with my business career, and since I left St. Dunstan's I have returned to my former position as Foreign and Colonial Director of my Company, and find I am able to carry out my duties as though nothing had happened.

If I ever had any doubts as to whether such a thing was possible those doubts were quickly dispelled during my studies at St. Dunstan's, where I learned to read and write under the new conditions. I also learned sub-consciously that feeling of self-reliance and independence which are the seeds of a blind man's prosperity. I look upon St. Dunstan's not only as a school of teaching, but as a school of inspiration, guiding the blinded soldier through that uncertain period when he first begins to realise his disablement and wonders what the future means.

I have forgotten my disablement, and I am now able to live as active a life as I did before, for activity is the best way of forgetting blindness. When I come to think that I am only one of a thousand, who has been made to forget his blindness, it makes me realise more than ever the meaning of St. Dunstan's.

As for the boys there, I think they are the jolliest lot I have ever met.

PRIVATE P. G. ALVEY

I must honestly say that at first when in hospital I knew I should not see again, I felt

that all was lost, but I find now, after your words of cheer, and my stay at the hostel, that I have lost nothing—in fact gained a lot.

LIEUT. WALTER MILLARD

It would be idle for me to try to express in words how grateful I am to you for all your kindnesses to me. Suffice it to say, as so many more have said, that I was never happier than when I was at good old St. Dunstan's. Nor are those days over, for you still keep so well in touch with us who have left that we feel that we are merely away on week-end holiday and have only to walk into the place to have it at our finger-ends. I used to think sometimes when I was at St. Dunstan's that perhaps we were happy because we could afford to disregard our physical loss through being with others equally handicapped. Fortunately we find that this was not so. Your teaching has taught us to be as near the normal as possible, and to be able to rub shoulders with anyone and, therefore, we are still happy being so equipped; we can look forward with no misgivings, but rather with ambition and with every prospect of prosperity.

A. T. COULSON

I often wondered, while at St. Dunstan's, whether I should find the days long when I got home again. Such is not the case, for I never seem to have any time to do all the things that I should like to do; what with the Braille, the typewriting, the violin, and the basket-making, I never seem to have a spare minute.

PTE. F. C. FLEETWOOD

My wife has gone to the market to-day with mats and netted articles ; I hope she will sell out. I wonder how many of us fellows have a shot at getting their own dinner. To-day I am looking after a big fire, several pots and pans, doing a bit of baking, giving to the dog his dinner, and doing a bit of matting into the bargain, and I am enjoying it. I do not omit to lay the cloth properly because I am alone. I can wash the dishes, too.

PTE. SIDNEY EVANS

When, after having lost both my eyes in France, after four years out there, I received an invitation from you to go to St. Dunstan's I did not know I was in for such a good time. I thought when things became black for me that it was the limit ; but St. Dunstan's changed all that for me and gave me an incentive to try and do something useful in the world. When I started to learn baskets I felt I was not so useless after all.

PTE. H. TEMPLE COATES

I assure you you have brought much happiness to my life, as to hundreds of others, and I well remember your kindly visits to me in hospital, with my vague conception of St. Dunstan's and the wonderful work you were doing ; but now I realise what a helpless soul I should have been, but for the tuition and splendid outfit received, which makes me feel capable of doing anything a sighted man can

do, in the ordinary way. I have my poultry farm all in order, and I believe it looks well from the compliments paid to me. I am proud to say no one has driven in a nail or a post; I fixed all the houses and put up the netting entirely myself. The only assistance I had was a man for half an hour to help me lift the roofs of the large houses into position, as no living man could lift one of these alone; but I lifted the fronts, backs, ends, and floors entirely alone, and these are 12 ft. by 6 ft.

In his book *Through St. Dunstan's to Light*, Mr. James Revlinson, a blinded Canadian, says :

“ Three years ago had anyone told me that a blind man could qualify as a stenographer I should have ridiculed the idea. But I am now able to take dictation in Braille shorthand at the rate of one hundred and twenty words per minute, and then transcribe my notes on any typewriting machine on the market just as speedily as the ordinary-sighted typist. And I never operated a typewriting machine before I became a student at St. Dunstan's.

“ What I am, I owe to St. Dunstan's, and while labouring here my heart ever goes back to dear old England. I feel towards St. Dunstan's—and so do all the boys who have passed through her halls—as does the grown man for the place of his birth. She is home for me. I was born again and nurtured into a new manhood by her, led by her from Stygian darkness to mental and spiritual light, and my heart turns with longing towards her. At times separation from the genial atmosphere of this

paradise of the sightless, from contact with the dominating, kindly presence of Sir Arthur Pearson and his noble assistants, weighs heavily upon my spirits. But there is work to be done here in Canada."

One of the manliest, otherwise from Arthur Pearson's point of view, one of the finest testimonies to St. Dunstan's I have read is the following letter written by Private John Brown, after leaving St. Dunstan's, to a newly blinded comrade.

"DEAR CHUM,—Just a line to let you know that I have received a letter telling me that you are in the same hospital as I was after I was wounded. I spent two months at the hospital, and I was sorry to leave it, but I left for St. Dunstan's, and although both my eyes were destroyed in France, I was made to feel that there was some use and some work for me to do. I am in business as a boot-repairer and mat-maker, and I am getting on well. I am writing this on the typewriter that I gained for proficiency, and I never used a typewriter before I was blinded. You will be able to do the same when you go to St. Dunstan's, where I know you will be happy. It is the finest place that I was ever in, and I look back on my stay there as the happiest in my life, for I was taught to forget that I was blind. Do not forget that though we are blind we can still use our hands and brains, so do not get low-spirited, for life is still worth living."

The St. Dunstan's men can speak for themselves, but others have been eager to speak for them. Employers have warmly praised their efficiency, and I confess that I find infinite pathos in the tearful, proud gratitude of mothers and fathers. Here is a letter written to Arthur Pearson from a soldier's mother in Australia.

“ I feel I cannot express my gratitude to you for the way my brave blind boy is able to get about so well and cheerfully, and my thanks to all those dear, kind people of St. Dunstan's who made life so pleasant for him when the darkest of shadows had threatened to overcast his life. That he is as cheerful and capable as many who have their sight is undoubted by all who have come in contact with him since his arrival home, and I am sure that he will, as you say, ‘enjoy life just as much, and perhaps more, than anyone else I know.’ It was far beyond my expectation that he should come home not only with knowledge enough to earn a living, but with means to do so.”

A father in Yorkshire writes :

“ We parents had only wild ideas of what we could do. St. Dunstan's has taught the men what they can do for themselves. The difference is this : they would have been dependent, and probably miserable and discontented, while you have made them independent, happy, and contented.”

And here is another father's letter. His son had been trained to be a masseur.

" My son has just had the telephone installed in his room this week, which is the final completion of his ' set up ' by St. Dunstan's. My wife and I feel we cannot let such an event pass without expressing our very warmest thanks to you first, and to all who have had the care and training of our boy. Our memories often travel back to that day in October 1916 when the great blow fell on him and our hopes were almost blotted out at the thought of him losing his sight for ever. We hoped and prayed that this might not be. Gradually we realised the worst; but with this revelation there was revealed to us by the staff at St. Mark's that there was such a place as St. Dunstan's, where the blind boys were taught to see and obtain Victory over Blindness. Now he has gone through his training and won his victory, and settled down in a profession we or he never dreamed of, we are simply astonished at his success, which we attribute to your own personal devotion to his interests, and the great influence you have exerted through all your sacrificing helpers, from St. Mark's Hospital right up to his finish at Sussex Place. I assure you no words of ours can express the deep sense of gratitude we feel to you for everything you have done ungrudgingly during these years, and for the last gift of a splendid clinic to our boy. Through him and all the hundreds of blinded boys who have passed through your hostel, you have definitely raised the standard of all the blind, and proved to the world that

blind people may be trained for the highest professions."

In the natural course of things, the work of St. Dunstan's will one day come to an end, and the last of the blinded soldiers who lived in Arthur Pearson's home of happiness will have run his course. In a generation St. Dunstan's will be just an incident of the Great War, an incident to be remembered with pride and satisfaction as men remember good work well done. When the names of the fighting men are forgotten, the name of Arthur Pearson will be remembered as one remembers the name of Florence Nightingale, the Lady of the Lamp. Just, too, as Florence Nightingale revolutionised the whole system of hospital nursing when she went out to the Crimea and contrived to annihilate Mrs. Gamp, so in his work at St. Dunstan's Arthur Pearson performed a work of inestimable value for blind people everywhere. As he himself said :

"The example of the blinded soldiers has created a new interest in the blind community that will have far-reaching results. In many countries, notably in Canada and the United States, where I have recently had an opportunity of explaining the methods and the ideals of St. Dunstan's, practical efforts are already on foot to help the civilian blind, and at the same time the general public, to realise that blindness is no barrier to exclude men and women from

all the enjoyments and activities of life ; that, though blindness may be the most cruel loss an individual can bear, it does not prevent people from taking their place in the world. From that point of view there are many worse handicaps, though they may be less apparent. The blind man may not be able to cross a crowded thoroughfare unaided, but if he chances to be a musician he can play a big organ, and if he happens to be a business man he can run a big business, and if he is a basket-maker he can make baskets not easily surpassed. There are plenty of men who can get across a busy road unaided who can do neither good brain work nor good manual work.

“It has become the aim of St. Dunstan's to open the eyes of the world to all that blinded folk can accomplish.”

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST YEARS

IN recognition of his work at St. Dunstan's, Arthur Pearson was created a baronet in 1916, and he received the G.B.E. in 1917.

I think it may be fairly said that, during the strenuous years of the war, Arthur Pearson was a happy man. He was too busy to have the time (even if he had the inclination) to mope, and the tremendous success of the work of St. Dunstan's was an immense satisfaction to him. His eagerness to try every new thing was shown, once more, by the fact that he made an æroplane ascent in 1917, and he frequently, half in jest, half in earnest, discussed the possibility of another new start in life in the South Sea islands.

As time went on, he learned to do more and more things for himself. How well he was able to type is shown by a letter written in April 1918 to P. W. Everett, which I have been permitted to read. There are only two mistakes in spelling and only in one instance is the spacing wrong. The signature was first written in small letters and afterwards in capitals with a humorous apology.

In 1919 Arthur Pearson had an interesting meeting with Helen Keller, the amazing American woman who was born deaf, blind, and dumb. She was first taught lip-reading and then she was taught to read Braille. She went to a high school for a short time, and finally graduated at Harvard University with the highest honours. She was actually taught to speak, and her typewriting—I have read her letters to Arthur Pearson—is quite as good as the ordinary typewriting of a sighted stenographer. In a letter written to Miss Keller, Arthur Pearson said :

“ You are probably tired of being told that you are the most wonderful example in the world of victory over blindness. But I should like to tell you this again. Your accomplishments will always be an incomprehensible mystery to me, though, after all, they are only the supreme proof of a point which I am never tired of making, and that is, that the greater the handicap, the greater the will and ability to surmount it, provided it is faced in the right spirit.”

In another letter, referring to a march of the men demanding that the Government should supply every blind man with a pension, Arthur Pearson said :

“ The main demand made by these people was that every blind person should be paid by the Government a pension large enough to support them in comfort. It should be perfectly

obvious to any sane human being that if the Government were thus to provide for blind people they would have equally to provide for people handicapped in every other way—an Utopian idea which could certainly not be expected to arrive in our time, and an idea which the present financial position of the country renders it perfectly impossible to carry out. A very unfortunate phase of the whole question is that a great number of blind adult people are blind entirely through their own fault.”

Arthur Pearson sent a parcel of Braille books to Miss Keller, and her letter of thanks expresses the feelings of tens of thousands of other blind people for the same good work :

“Some of the books from England have arrived, and I can scarcely keep my ravenous fingers off them long enough to sleep, or walk, or satisfy another kind of hunger, less spiritual but inexorable. You are far more potent than those three Wise men (?) of Versailles. They give away mere islands, cities and valleys, you bestow the bread of life, kingdoms of thought and stars that shine in the darkest night ! It is wonderful ! Books are perennial fountains of joy to me. When the days grow a bit drab and monotonous, I put my hand between the pages of a book, and lo ! my sky is blue again.

There is no frigate like a book
To take us leagues away—

from troubles real and imaginary. The books you are having embossed are live books—books

in which I feel the heart-throbs of men. Such books quicken our sympathies and aspirations, and are creative forces for good in the world. I can never thank you enough for your great kindness to me ; so I shall not try. I shall only say, no one can be more grateful to another than I am to you, and shall be all my days."

In another letter Miss Keller said :

"The books you sent were forwarded to me here in the land of cotton and mocking-birds, where I am visiting my family. I can never thank you enough for the world of pleasure you have given me in these twenty-two volumes. And all kinds of pleasure too, the soul-stirring witch shades of *The Dark Forest*, the delightful 'ill-written autobiography' of Joseph Vance, the galloping narrative of Sherlock Holmes's adventures, the diplomat's diary, so rich in the unworked ore of history. But above all, I have your *Victory over Blindness* in Braille. Reading it myself seems like feeling the inspiration of your presence. How your words, passing under the finger-tips of the blind, will pulse new hope and energy into them. Truly you are the St. Dunstan of the sightless throughout the world.

"I am glad to say that the missing volumes of *Clayhanger* and *The Devil's Disciple* have arrived. I thank you for taking the trouble so kindly to see about them.

"I have not read the essays of Elbert Hubbard you mention. I am sure they will interest me. I have heard so much about his life and his strong personality.

“You must indeed have had a wonderful trip in the Pyrenees. I also revel in climbing. Last summer I spent some of the loveliest days of my life among the steep slopes and mighty rocks of the White Mountains. It was a joy to me to be able to follow with foot and hand the romantic caprices of ridge, stream, leafy bower and mossy wood. It was all a dream come true that I had frequently had of those very paths winding through one beauty after another, and I have never known about them. I was certain my soul had trod there sure-footed, all-seeing before my body groped its way among those great, cloud-wrapt hills.

“It is splendid to hear of all the new work you are taking up—‘houses of childhood’ for sightless babies, colleges for blind girls and boys. There is something divine, universal in the sympathy and insight with which you strive to meet every need, every aspiration of all classes of the blind. There is also something of the new social gospel in your endeavour to form all the blind into ‘a fraternity with an enduring bond of interest,’ one guiding principle of self-denial, ‘a surprisingly uniform standard of achievement.’ You say you have devoted yourself to the biggest individual enterprise of your life, and surely it is the happiest, it spreads such a flood of light everywhere.”

In a third letter Miss Keller wrote :

“About twenty-five more books from England have arrived. I want to tell you again what a world of pleasure you have given me. My hungry fingers devour the good things set

before them. As I sit here in my study reading, you often seem to come yourself with the books. So in fancy I spend many hours full of the happiest companionship. I think people never really know each other until they come together in a congenial work. I dwell with gratitude on the happiness that has come to the blind here as well as in Great Britain through your efforts. You have done much to lighten their weary hours with pleasant reading, opening for them the outside world of affairs and the bright world of the imagination which makes the past like the present. I can never tell you what we blind people owe to you for making life more real, more useful, more human and significant. I can only hope that the happiness you give others shines back upon you. I have simply revelled in the new books. Turgenieff and Tolstoi are wonderful. It seems almost as if Turgenieff had experienced physical blindness, so vivid and poignant are the sensations he describes. All the senses are to him gateways to the elemental qualities of human character. Tolstoi's *A Russian Proprietor* brought home to me one of the saddest facts, man's unconscious ignorance of his own misery and unfulfilment. Until men realise their enslavement as acutely as we realise our blindness, they will be incapable of the highest progress and freedom. Oh these Russians! How deeply they penetrate into the secrets of existence. They are really the great Optimists. Their faith in humanity is immense, and their acceptance of the Ideal is unhesitating."

When the war was over, and as the work at St. Dunstan's began to grow less insistent,

Arthur Pearson had the inevitable reaction. His nerves became troublesome and his generally robust health unsatisfactory. The visit to Canada wearied him still more, but after a stay in the South of France in the autumn of 1920, he came back to London almost his old self. A long letter written from France to his cousin shows how he retained his interest in the life around him, and how he had almost learned to see without eyes. I quote part of this interesting note.

“It was a sham Bull Fight, conducted with all due appreciation of the rules of that barbaric game. The scene was the Pelota ground, which, as I expect you know, is an exaggerated Fives Court with only a front wall. The tiers of seats with which it is surrounded were crowded with excited and eager spectators, and in one corner was a mysterious canvas-walled enclosure, from which proceeded sounds calculated to arouse the excitement to the highest pitch.

“A prodigious fanfare of trumpets heralded the oncoming of the Bull, who leapt into the arena from the enclosure, terrible to behold as to his upper portions, but with legs very closely resembling those of human beings. But nobody seemed to notice this, and the formidable horns and great goggling eyes struck terror into the hearts of all the spectators, and froze with horror the two very minute donkeys who were privileged to bear the doughty Picadors.

“The front legs of the Bull, which, let me whisper to you, belonged to the father of our

housemaid, displayed miracles of activity. Followed very creditably, in view of the obvious difficulties, by the hind legs, they bowled over one Picador after the other, and made the lives of the other assailants extremely uncomfortable for them.

“Encouraged by his [success, the Bull plunged round the arena, and threatened the lives of the spectators, whose shrieks rent the air. At length the fatal moment arrived. The gallant Matador—brother of the handmaiden aforesaid, and so son of the forelegs—sprang into the arena, and gave the *coup de grâce* with all the skill and dexterity of the most beloved Espada of the Madrid Bull Ring.”

In the last months of his life Arthur Pearson was his old, cheerful, energetic self. It gave him unqualified pleasure to have his son, Sir Neville Pearson, with him in the business at Henrietta Street, and in one or two casual conversations that I had with him during this time, he seemed to me to be just the same bustling, hearty C. A. P. whom I had first met twenty years before. One of the last books that he read was Ibanez's *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, about which he was enthusiastic. The last arrangement of importance that he made before his death was that the history of the Prince of Wales's visit to India and Japan should be published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton for the benefit of the funds of St. Dunstan's.



IN THE GROUNDS OF ST. DUNSTAN'S DURING THE WAR.

CHAPTER X

THE END OF THE LONG DAY'S WORK

EARLY on the morning of December 9th, 1921, the news agencies announced Arthur Pearson's tragic death. On the evening before he went with Lady Pearson to the Prince's Theatre to see the performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Yeoman of the Guard*. A week before he had been riding on the South Downs. The nerve strain from which he had suffered had entirely passed away, and never in his life had he been more alive, more interested, more intent on the future or less handicapped by the past.

The details of his death may be told in a few sentences. He was awakened at a quarter-past seven in the morning, and a quarter of an hour afterwards he went unaided to the bathroom. He had no valet to wait on him and he always insisted on preparing his bath himself. The bath was enamelled and, on the day before, he had mentioned that it was rather slippery. On the morning of his death he must have slipped forward, striking his head on the nozzle of the tap. The blow stunned him. He fell face

forward into the water and died from asphyxia. He generally took an hour to dress, and breakfasted at half-past eight. As he did not come down to breakfast, his secretary went to his son, the present Sir Neville Pearson, at a quarter to nine. When Sir Neville went to the bathroom, his father had been dead for at least half an hour. In recording a verdict of death from accidental causes the Coroner said :

“ Sir Arthur Pearson's loss to the public is very great. He was known as one of the finest of philanthropists. He had a sunny, buoyant, and courageous nature which, when he was afflicted himself with loss of sight, did not lead him to despair and to moping, but only braced him for further energy and to do good to his fellow-beings. The work he did for St. Dunstan's is so well known that I need not allude to it further. Probably he will be remembered by it better than by anything else he did in his life. It was a very fine work of charity. His loss to his relatives must of course be severe and deeply felt, but I venture to think that the loss to the public will be felt with a still greater and deeper sorrow by those who miss the service which he has been able to render.”

The extent to which Arthur Pearson of St. Dunstan's had captured the affections of a nation which loves nothing more than practical comradeship was shown by the universal sorrow with which the news of his death was received and by the eulogies printed in every newspaper

in the country. In his old paper, *The Daily Express*, Ralph Blumenfeld, said :

“ A man of achievement, strong, vivid, a radiant figure of energy, enthusiasm, and human affection, has come to a sudden and tragic end of his picturesque career. Arthur Pearson, the blind leader of the blind, whose death is regretted to-day, was one of those rare men who are born for a purpose and who, having achieved that purpose, are taken away to be remembered as flaming examples to posterity.”

The Daily Telegraph declared that “ the secret of his own success lay in doing everything possible for others.” *The Daily Mail* said :

“ Sir Arthur Pearson will be remembered neither for his achievements in business nor for his unsuspected private taste in art, but for his quiet sacrifice of all ease and leisure and his own desires to the help and comfort not only of the stricken soldiers but of the blind all the world over. Few men have won gratitude more enduring ; none is more grievously mourned to-day.”

The London correspondent of the *Yorkshire Evening Express*, wrote : “ Not since Lord Kitchener died, I think, has London been so grieved for a sudden demise as it was to-day, on hearing of the death of Sir Arthur Pearson. He has grown to be not so much a man as an institution.”

A very fine tribute to Arthur Pearson's

career was printed in the Socialist *Daily Herald*, which said :

“The tragic death of Sir Arthur Pearson removes from public life a figure of romantic courage. His was a paradoxical career. What he did in the fullness of his powers was very little compared with what he did when his sight had failed him. Ancient tradition is full of blind prophets and poets. It is an obvious and natural thing for a man whom misfortune has cheated of the outer light to turn to the inner light. Milton had his great mental vision to console him. But, however, Arthur Pearson had no such resource. He was neither prophet nor poet. He was essentially a man of the world. When he knew that his sight was going, he determined to show that a man of the world could live in the world and work in the world without eyes to see. His triumph over darkness and the wonderful way in which he carried on with the normal detail of life were the fruits of an admirable and indomitable courage.”

The *Manchester Guardian* (one of Arthur Pearson's bitterest opponents in the old Tariff Reform League days) said :

“He urged and showed by his personal example that blindness is not an irretrievable disaster, but a difficulty to be overcome, that it is to be met not by pity and inert resignation, but by opportunity and effort. His name will live longer in honour for this than it could have done through any success in the work in which he believed up to his prime he would spend his life.”

The *Sunday Times* said: "If he found blindness an opportunity for himself, he made it an opportunity for others. He slew Giant Despair." The *Observer* said: "When he missed being what is called a great magnet, he made himself a great man." The *Weekly Dispatch* called him "a gallant gentleman" (as indeed he was!) *Truth* said:

"The loss of his sight turned Pearson into a hero. He has left behind him a name and a story which deserves to be remembered as long as bodily affliction besets mankind, and he has done work which will entitle him to the gratitude of his fellow-sufferers far beyond his generation."

The *Spectator* said: "His courage, his sweetness of temper and his determination to help other people were amazing. His natural generosity and energy were all concentrated upon one great object."

Writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, Mr. T. P. O'Connor said: "He was a man typical of all the best that is in his race, its courage, its fortitude and its essential sympathy with misfortune. If one could see the steady hand of omniscient fate it might seem that Pearson was bound in the shackles of blindness that other blind might be free."

In an article in the *Morning Post*, Lord Chaplin said:

"I always thought when I was with him that nothing was more remarkable than the

patient but indomitable courage with which he bore his great affliction. That he felt it, and at times acutely, I have little doubt. How could it be otherwise? But he never showed it or allowed it to be perceptible except by the increasing efforts which it spurred him on to make for the relief of others suffering like himself."

Perhaps the most eloquent tribute to Arthur Pearson that appeared in the *Daily Press* was written by Mr. Hannen Swaffer in the *Daily Graphic*. I quote it here almost in full :

"Journalism has given many great men to the countries of the world—Premiers like Clemenceau, novelists like Dickens, names you could spin off by the yard. But there is no man of whom Journalism is prouder to-day than Cyril Arthur Pearson, who died yesterday in his bath, mourned by millions of people.

"Known for years as a great organiser, and as a newspaper man of marked ability, his triumph came when, in his retirement, he lost his sight. For, by a dispensation of Providence almost unique in history, he was able to use his blindness for the consolation of thousands of men who lost more than their lives in the Great War—their sight.

"The news reached St. Dunstan's yesterday about ten o'clock when 200 men, the last batch now being trained to earn their own livings in the darkness, nearly all wept through sightless eyes when they heard their benefactor was dead. . . .

"Eleven years ago, Sir Arthur Pearson's

sight began to fade, and four years later, just before the war, the glaucoma won, and he never saw anything again. But, with the iron will that had made him succeed in Fleet Street, and with an industry and patience that was monumental, he taught himself to live his own life, almost unassisted.

"When the war started, what he had learned he placed at the disposal of his country. First, he sent Braille books for the blind to read, and then started a scheme for educating blinded soldiers and sailors. He had conquered his own loss of sight, and so he set out to lead others to the same conquest.

"'If he had not been blind,' said Mr. Kessell yesterday, 'he could never have brought the power and happiness into other men's lives as he did. He made his own misfortune a blessing for others, because, like the men who came to him, he himself had once seen and now was sightless. He won their confidence, always insisting that blindness was not an affliction, only a handicap.'

"'The blind can teach the blind better than anyone else,' said Sir Arthur; and in consequence of what he built up in the wonderful home Otto Kahn placed at his disposal in Regent's Park, thousands of blind people all over the world are being trained.

"His whole life was one long lesson in cheerfulness. I have often seen him lunching in public restaurants, or speaking at public dinners, and, except for the sort of way he would feel for the edge of his plate, or put his knife down, so that he could find it again, you would never have guessed that this man, who once presided

over the Tariff Commission, and once controlled a score of journals—at one time there were four morning papers, and three evening papers, besides all sorts of weeklies and magazines on two continents—was a man who could see nothing.

“I wonder what they will carve on the stone over Sir Arthur Pearson's grave. Whenever the inspired fingers that penned Holy Writ wanted a phrase that meant the achievement of the greatest miracle in the world, they wrote, as the Psalmist wrote, ‘He openeth the eyes of the blind.’ When Isaiah, bursting with prophecy, dreamed of the future, the most he could say was, ‘The eyes of the blind shall see.’

“Above the grave where they bury ‘C. A. P.,’ they should carve, in immortal stone, the words of Job, ‘I was eyes to the blind.’

“Beside the achievement of his last sightless years, the making of his fortune, most of which he lost, was nothing. The building up of a vast business was, beside this, merely a sordid thing. When millionaires are forgotten, his name will live: for that which he had not, he gave to others.”

The following are a few more blossoms gathered haphazard from the newspaper wreaths that were laid upon Arthur Pearson's coffin:

Sporting Times: “His work may be termed as the brightest beacon that has lighted up the hope and the future of the blinded, and his own victory over blindness will live on after

him as an undimmed memory of a great life of kindness to his fellow-beings."

Town Topics : " Arthur Pearson lives, and ever will live, as the captain courageous of the blind."

Glasgow Herald : " Sir Arthur Pearson lighted for the blind a torch that will never be extinguished."

Liverpool Courier : " His memory will be revered by thousands, his work a triumphant piece of altruism achieved with splendid resource, persistence, and energy. He was the trustee for the nation in its care for the blind. He was equally beloved for the greatness of his soul as for the beauty of his life."

Manchester Guardian : " He was the happiest man I have ever known."

Nottingham Journal : " No man had a greater claim to fame and honour."

Sheffield Independent : " He was the founder of a new earth for the blind."

Sheffield Telegraph : " He lightened a vast burden of human misery. Bearing his own blindness cheerfully, he strove to bring the same cheerfulness to others, and he did not fail."

Daily News : " A passionate sympathy inspired and dignified his extraordinary energy and organising power."

Evening Standard : " The career of Sir Arthur Pearson is at once a romance and a glory. This fight against the foe of physical darkness—a

magnificent struggle—undoubtedly owes the major part of its success to the virile personality, the optimism, and the genius of a man who would never acknowledge defeat. He treated blindness from a new angle : he cut out entirely the word ‘pity’ and the word ‘affliction,’ and insisted that blind people, above all others, must be cheerful, with a wide, humorous outlook.”

Financial Times : “The true meaning of the word ‘charity’ guided his whole life.”

Star : “It is to the lasting honour of Sir Arthur Pearson that when stricken down by blindness he refused to take refuge in despair, but set to work to assist other victims less fortunately placed as regards this world’s goods.”

Lady Pearson received the following message from Their Majesties the King and Queen :

“The King and Queen are shocked and distressed to hear of the grievous loss which has befallen you through a fatal accident to Sir Arthur Pearson, and I am commanded to convey to you the assurances of their Majesties’ heartfelt sympathy. Their Majesties feel that his fellow-countrymen will gratefully remember the noble work accomplished by Sir Arthur in alleviating and brightening the lives of those suffering from that affliction which he himself had borne with such exemplary patience, courage, and cheerfulness.”

Immediately on hearing the news Queen Alexandra wired to Lady Pearson as follows :

“ Too distressed and horrified for words for the terribly sad and distressing news of your beloved husband's death. Words fail me to express all I feel for you and us all, at the loss of so great and valuable a man and friend to us all. God comfort you.”

A further telegram from Her Majesty read :

“ My thoughts and prayers never leave you for a moment in your terrible loss and agony. Your beloved husband's loss is a truly National one, as well as a loss to us all. As a personal friend my thoughts never leave you for a moment.”

The Prince of Wales cabled from India, and messages were received from almost every other member of the royal family.

The Prime Minister sent the following message :

“ My wife and I are deeply shocked to hear of the tragic death of your husband. The loss of such a public benefactor will be very widely felt, and he will ever be remembered by the wonderful part which he played in brightening the lives of those suffering under a terrible affliction. Please accept our most sincere sympathy.”

Mr. Fisher, the Minister of Education, wrote :

“ I am writing on behalf of the Board of Education and myself to offer you our deep sympathy and to express the great regret with which we have heard of Sir Arthur Pearson's tragic death. During many years the Board and their officers had learned to look with ever growing confidence to Sir Arthur Pearson for help in all their work which touched the welfare of the Blind, and we owe much to his unselfish labours and inspiring counsel. In work on Committees, in the foundation or re-establishment of Educational Institutions for the Blind, and in the encouragement of research into educational problems, to speak only of those of his activities which brought him into contact with this Department, Sir Arthur Pearson's influence was of incalculable value to the cause to which he dedicated his great powers ; and the sudden loss of these must long be felt by all Public Bodies which care for the Blind, no less than by the thousands of individual sufferers who so long looked up to him for guidance and support.”

The Rt. Hon. Ian MacPherson, Minister of Pensions :

“ Deeply grieved to hear of your sad loss ; the whole Empire will mourn the death of one who was above all the friend of our Blinded Soldiers, and out of his own affliction created hope for them in place of despair.”

The Prime Minister of Canada cabled :

“ The Government of Canada convey to you

deepest sympathy in the sad loss of your distinguished husband, and desires to express its profound appreciation of the work which he did for blinded Canadian soldiers at St. Dunstan's during the Great War and for the further interest which he took during his lifetime in the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, this having been of incalculable service to Canadian Soldiers, all of whom regarded him as a benefactor and a friend."

The High Commissioner of New Zealand :

"On return to London I learn with regret of the sad death of Sir Arthur Pearson, and desire to express my sympathy in your bereavement. New Zealand very fully appreciates his great and sympathetic help to her sons who lost their sight in the Great War. The loss of his noble example will be felt throughout the Empire."

Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Vincent, Superintendents of After-Care for South African Blinded Soldiers :

"South African Blinded Soldiers and we deeply grieve with you in your and our sad and irreparable loss, and wish to express to you our heartfelt sympathy."

Mr. Clutha M'Kenzie, M.P. for Auckland East, N.Z., a blinded New Zealand soldier who works for the benefit of his comrades :

"Great blow to us all. Deepest sympathy. New Zealand Blinded Soldiers."

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Her Ex. Lady Forster, wife of Governor-General of Australia and President of the Australian Red Cross :

“ Australian Red Cross laments death of Sir Arthur Pearson. His work for Australian Blinded Soldiers will ever be remembered with deepest gratitude.”

Mr. L. M. Wood, President of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind :

“ Am inexpressibly grieved to learn of Sir Arthur's death. His loss to the world is incalculable. The blind of Canada, who owe him so much, extend their deep sympathy, and I, with hundreds of Canadians who knew Sir Arthur personally, mourn the loss of a warm-hearted and generous friend.”

Captain Delvaux, Commandant Institution for Belgian War-blinded, Boitsfort, Bruxelles :

“ The Belgian War-blinded, deeply touched by the death of Sir Arthur Pearson, send to their English Comrades the expression of their warmest sympathy.”

The President of American Permanent Blind Relief War Fund :

“ Greatly shocked by sad news death Sir Arthur Pearson. We mourn with you the loss of the Blind's most devoted and precious friend and benefactor. Please accept heart-felt sympathy, and convey our condolences to Sir Arthur's family.”

Messages of condolence were also received from Cardinal Bourne, Lord and Lady Derby, Lord Reading, The High Commissioners of the British Dominions, Lord Northcliffe; the Mayors of St. Marylebone and many other boroughs, and from practically every Blind Institution in the British Empire, and from many of those interested in the welfare of the Blind in the United States, France, and Italy.

But deep as was the sorrow for the death of Arthur Pearson among his fellow-citizens who could see, deeper still was it among his comrades who were blind.

Sir Washington Ranger, one of Arthur Pearson's most intimate colleagues, who is himself blind, summarised his achievements :

"The various departments of his labours for the blind seemed to provide in turn a field peculiarly suitable for the exercise of one in particular of his many gifts. The required capacity, the will to exercise it, the necessary judgment in its exercise, and his watchful care of result when once reached in each particular work were the subject of amazement and admiration on the part of all who were privileged to be his colleagues and to be in touch from day to day with what was going on under his vigilant and efficient oversight.

"In addition to the blinded men of St. Dunstan's, the civilian blinded benefited by the new activities which were so largely the product of his brilliant brain and great heart.

"The great St. Dunstan's Work for the

Blinded Soldier and Sailor needs no comment. The education of boys at Worcester College for the Blind has reached its present measure of efficiency and been greatly extended through Sir Arthur Pearson's altruistic devotion to the interests of the College. The College for Girls with little or no sight, at Chorley Wood, was started under his pioneer influence, and bids fair to be in due time a like blessing to the blind girls of the country. The Blind Babies' Home at 'Sunshine House,' Chorley Wood, is another of his splendid activities which is growing, and will become a very potent source of good to the blind babyhood of the country. The Homes for the Blind at Chester, at Clifton, and at Brighton have all engaged Sir Arthur's attention and help. The opening of Hoole Bank, Chester, was, in fact, the last public act for the blind of his truly wonderful life.

"Sir Arthur Pearson also took a definite and particular interest in the printing and publishing of embossed literature for the blind both in the Braille and Moon types, with the result that the supply has enormously increased of late years both in quantity and variety, to the infinite advantage and pleasure of the blind.

"In every kind of helpful service to the blind—soldier and civilian, women and girls—and also to the deaf-blind, Sir Arthur's tireless energy and perfectly unique powers were ungrudgingly given, and with remarkable success. His loss to the blind of all English-speaking peoples, and, indeed, of the whole world, is great beyond compare."

The affectionate gratitude expressed in the

letters from the men of St. Dunstan's that I have quoted was dramatically repeated on the day of Sir Arthur Pearson's funeral. During the three days before the funeral, the officials at St. Dunstan's and the National Institute of the Blind were snowed under with telegrams from all parts of the country from blind men announcing their intention of coming to London. London has seen many invasions in its history, but never anything like this invasion of the blind. Many of the blind men brought their wives with them as guides, and arrangements had to be made for their accommodation and their transport to the cemetery. Two hundred men of the Guards' Brigade promptly volunteered to act as guides. Helpers were sent early in the morning to every London terminus to meet the blind mourners. A large emergency dormitory was fitted up in the grounds of St. Dunstan's, and a lunch was arranged for fifteen hundred people. All this was in the true Arthur Pearson spirit. There was another touch in the funeral day's arrangements of which he certainly would have approved. Arthur Pearson loathed slovenliness in personal appearance. He always urged his blind followers to preserve their self-respect by almost excessive cleanliness and tidiness. A number of the blind mourners travelled all through the night, and near each terminus a barber was found who was ready to shave them on their arrival. It is a pleasant

thing to add that more than one of these hard-working barbers refused to take a penny for their work.

Arthur Pearson was buried at Hampstead Cemetery. Before the interment a service was held at Holy Trinity Church in the Marylebone Road, conducted by the Bishop of London, the Reverend Prebendary E. N. Sharpe, and the Reverend Harold Gibb, who himself lost his eyes during the war. Here were gathered representatives of all the many activities with which Arthur Pearson had been connected during the crowded years of his life. The King and Queen, Queen Alexandra, the Queen of Norway, and the Prince of Wales sent representatives.

The newspaper world, in which Arthur Pearson had spent so many years of his strenuous life, had its delegates in the church in the persons of many famous journalists. The sturdy form of Lord Chaplin reminded us of the Tariff Reform agitation, and of Arthur Pearson's one incursion into the political world. The presence of his old Headmaster told us of Winchester's pride in an indomitable son, and Sir Robert Baden Powell was there to acknowledge the debt of the Boy Scout movement to the man whom we were mourning. The Cabinet was represented by several Ministers. High Commissioners from the Dominions paid their mead of thanks for the helping hand Arthur Pearson had given to blinded Colonial soldiers, and

many well-known writers were in the church to mourn the great newspaper proprietor, who had always been generous to the men to whose originality and ability his publications owed at least a part of their success. And the blind mourned the blind. There were two blind men among the pall-bearers, every blind institution had its representatives, and in the side aisles there was a pathetic cohort of the blind, for whom Arthur Pearson had planned and worked.

The mourners were Lady Pearson, Arthur Pearson's son and three daughters, his sisters and other relatives.

While the service was being held in the Marylebone Road, hundreds of blind mourners were gathering by the graveside at Hampstead. The scene there was most eloquently described in the *Star* :

“ In little groups of twelve and twenty, blinded men from every part of the kingdom, from Aberdeen and Penzance, from Newcastle, Bristol and Plymouth, came along to Hampstead Cemetery this morning to pay final tribute to the man who was, above all others, their benefactor and friend.

“ Never before had such a moving scene been witnessed at a public funeral. It enhanced, if that were possible, the pathos of Sir Arthur's tragic end.

“ They were brought to the cemetery in buses and motor-cars.

“ More than two hundred men of the Guards

had volunteered to act as their guides, and they helped the sightless men down from the top of the buses, and then guided them gently to the graveside.

"There were many affecting reunions of men who had fought side by side in the far-flung lines of the war, who could recognise each other now only by the sound of voices that had never been forgotten.

"Some of the blinded mourners carried wreaths and bunches of flowers—tributes they had brought with them from their homes on behalf of those who were blind, even as they were.

"In the cemetery itself and lining Fortune Green Road was a huge concourse of people, numbering many thousands.

"Men and women of reverent demeanour were there who had never seen Sir Arthur, but who knew him as the man who had made life easier for the similarly handicapped.

"The service conducted at the graveside was similar to that being held at Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone, and also at the Church of St. Clement Danes, in the Strand.

"Addressing the strange gathering, relieved in its sombre hue here and there by the brighter uniforms of the Guardsmen, as 'Boys,' the Rev. J. A. Williams, chaplain to St. Dunstan's, spoke a glowing eulogy of him they had gathered to mourn.

"As he began to repeat the opening prayer, every head was bared, and there was not a movement among those who had come to hear, not to see.

"With slightly bowed heads they remained

in reverent attention. The silence was intense.

"Only the remote din of distant traffic broke, now and then, the hush.

"Then, led by the band of the 1st Grenadier Guards, the mourners began the hymn 'Lead, kindly light.'

"At first the singing was faint, voices were not responsive in the tensity of that moment, but gradually the singing welled into mightiness as the crowd caught the tune, and to the farthest fringes of the throng by the cemetery gates, this hymn of ineffable pleading—so strangely significant now—rose to the heavens.

"Not a word of the service was missed by the men, and when they sang 'Abide with Me,' and 'For all the Saints,' women wiped their eyes unashamedly, and men turned away and looked across that God's acre through the mist of tears.

"The Blessing was pronounced by the Rev. J. A. Williams, and then, scarce before the last words had died away, the mighty and the shuddering opening chords of Chopin's 'Funeral March,' broke upon the congregation with an almost startling suddenness.

"Women sobbed aloud. Men were overcome.

"It was a poignant episode in a service that had seemed always poignant.

"A mountain of flowers had been sent to cover the grave. There were gigantic wreaths and more humble floral tributes laid out in long rows in a corner of the burial-ground.

"Preceding the coffin, carried by a Boy Scout was an emblem in flowers of the Union

Jack, surmounted by a white dove and the device 'V.O.B.'—the initial letters of the legend which has been made immortal by the man who was being laid to rest, 'Victory over Blindness.'

The preliminary service ended, and the last scene of all began. I quote the account that appeared in the *Daily Mail*:

"The coffin, on which lay many wreaths, including a cross from Queen Alexandra, was lowered into a grave lined with laurel leaves and white chrysanthemums; and as soon as the principal mourners, including Lady Pearson, had gone, the great crowd of blind ex-soldiers, past and present men of St. Dunstan's, the blind training school which Sir Arthur Pearson founded, began to walk past the resting-place of their benefactor.

"Guided gently by big Guardsmen in grey overcoats, and by nurses, they moved slowly past the grave in groups of two and three, arm in arm. Humbly dressed and smartly dressed, some wearing dark spectacles, some with the blank expression of the blind man whose eyes look normal, the sightless procession moved uncertainly along in the December sunlight. Some of the men had come from Scotland and Cornwall and Wales, and other far-off places to attend the funeral.

"As the men moved along the Rev. E. W. Williams, in white surplice, said again and again, "On the left, boys. They laid Sir Arthur among the flowers. The tomb is on the left, decorated with white chrysanthemums. He is on the left

among the flowers." The blind men turned their heads towards the grave as they passed, almost as if they could see it.

"Feelings of great personal regret were evident among the blind men, to whom Sir Arthur was a kind voice in the darkness.

" 'It is the least we can do for him, to come here, for he did so much for us,' said one; 'I haven't realised it yet—it takes a long time to realise it.'

"Another talked of the way Sir Arthur worked at St. Dunstan's. 'He was always there,' he said. 'He saw every one when they arrived, and he saw them when they went. I won't realise what has happened till I hear other names talked of in connection with St. Dunstan's work.'

"A very large number of wreaths were sent, and some two hundred were laid out in rows near the grave. One West End florist stated that more wreaths had been made by the establishment for this funeral than for any other since that of King Edward. Among other wreaths were tributes from Canadian and Australian men who had been to St. Dunstan's, from Lord and Lady Northcliffe, Lord and Lady Riddell, the Duke of Newcastle, and Sir Frank and Lady and Miss Newnes. The Canadian tribute, which consisted of a huge model of a maple leaf made of yellow flowers, was particularly fine. Queen Alexandra wrote on her wreath :

'Life's race well run,
Life's work well done,
Life's crown well won.
Now comes rest.

'From ALEXANDRA.

"Lady Pearson and Sir Neville Pearson, her son, were the chief mourners. When the coffin had been lowered into the grave, both mother and son threw lilies of the valley on to it.

"Led by a band of the Scots Guards and a blind choir from the Royal Normal College for the Blind, West Norwood, the sightless mourners sang several hymns during the service preceding the interment, each verse being read out aloud by the Rev. E. W. Williams before being sung.

"During the interment ceremony one verse of 'O God, our help in ages past,' was sung by the great congregation.

"To the blind mourners it was a strange morning. Always in the dark, they had had a long journey in the train and had travelled by omnibus to St. Dunstan's, where in a moment they had been swept back into the past, by the feel of old familiar landmarks and the sound of well-known voices. They had journeyed to the cemetery in omnibuses, and there, led by people whom they distinguished as soldiers by the feel of the uniform, they had walked in the rather chilly winter wind to a soft grassy place, where they heard the sound of many quiet voices and of moving feet.

"Then from the darkness came the voice of their old friend the chaplain, music, singing, more music, a hush, the sad strains of the Dead March, rising and falling, the sound of the slow-moving feet of the mourners following the coffin, the voice of the clergyman at the graveside, and the singing of the hymn.

"It was a strange morning, but one which they had spent with one thought—to pay tribute to their helper in the darkness."

Fleet Street paid its tribute to the greatest philanthropist who had lived its life of adventure at a special service at St. Clement Danes.

London, the real, generally unemotional, workaday London, was curiously moved by Arthur Pearson's death and funeral. His courageous life and splendid achievement had caught the popular imagination. The crowds of blind men mourning for a friend who was no more, moved the habitually callous and indifferent. I myself had a curious experience of the genuineness of the popular grief. I took a taxi-cab from the church in the Marylebone Road to my office. As I paid the fare, the driver said with that curious truculence with which unemotional persons try to hide unusual emotion: "That was a good man, that was, a very good man, and I don't care who hears me say so." I knew that Arthur Pearson would have loved the crude homage of my taximan as much as the well-phrased praises of the great.

Arthur Pearson was great in his courage, great in his service to his fellows. The work that he began will go on. He has left behind him a tradition of service, a splendid obligation. His widow and his son have taken up the burden and are carrying on. And somehow one imagines that in the generations to come there will always be a Pearson who will regard it as his business and his privilege to care for the

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interests of the blind. But the example that Arthur Pearson has set will remain an inspiration far outside the narrow limits of his own personal circle. He has taught us that to serve one must understand and one must sympathise. He has taught us that salvation comes through play as well as through work, and, perhaps, the most important lesson that Arthur Pearson inculcated at St. Dunstan's was that living is a greater thing than earning a living. So he has run his course. He lived the life of a man, a very human, lovable man, good to know because, despite misfortune, he always found it good to live. And now he sleeps in ever-accumulating blessings.

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